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COMPLETE IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOLUME I.

BOSTON:  
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## TO THE QUEEN.

---

REVERED, beloved,—O you that hold  
A nobler office upon earth  
Than arms, or power of brain, or birth,  
Could give the warrior kings of old,

Victoria,—since your Royal grace  
To one of less desert allows  
This laurel greener from the brows  
Of him that uttered nothing base;

And should your greatness, and the care  
That yokes with empire, yield you time  
To make demand of modern rhyme,  
If aught of ancient worth be there;

Then—while a sweeter music wakes,  
And through wild March the throstle calls,  
Where, all about your palace-walls,  
The sunlit almond-blossom shakes—

Take, Madam, this poor book of song;  
For, though the faults were thick as dust  
In vacant chambers, I could trust  
Your kindness. May you rule us long,

And leave us rulers of your blood  
As noble till the latest day!  
May children of our children say,  
“She wrought her people lasting good;

" Her court was pure; her life serene;  
God gave her peace; her land reposed;  
A thousand claims to reverence closed  
In her as Mother, Wife and Queen;

" And statesmen at her council met  
Who knew the seasons, when to take  
Occasion by the hand, and make  
The bounds of freedom wider yet,

By shaping some august decree,  
Which kept her throne unshaken still,  
Broad-based upon her people's will,  
And compassed by the inviolate sea."

MARCH, 1851.

# POEMS.

---

## CLARIBEL.

### A MELODY.

WHERE Claribel low-lieth  
The breezes pause and die,  
Letting the rose-leaves fall :  
But the solemn oak-tree sigheth,  
Thick-leaved, ambrosial,  
With an ancient melody  
Of an inward agony,  
Where Claribel low-lieth.

At eve the beetle boometh  
Athwart the thicket lone :  
At noon the wild bee hummeth  
About the mossed headstone :  
At midnight the moon cometh  
And looketh down alone.  
Her song the lintwhite swelleth,  
The clear-voiced mavis dwelleth,  
The callow throistle lispeth,  
The slumbrous wave outwelleth,  
The babbling runnel crispeth,  
The hollow grot replieth  
Where Claribel low-lieth.



## L I L I A N .

AIRY, fairy Lilian,  
Flitting, fairy Lilian,  
When I ask her if she love me,  
Clasps her tiny hands above me,  
Laughing all she can ;  
She'll not tell me if she love me,  
Cruel little Lilian.

When my passion seeks  
Pleasance in love-sighs,  
She, looking through and through me  
Thoroughly to undo me,  
Smiling, never speaks :  
So innocent-arch, so cunning-simple,  
From beneath her gathered wimple  
Glancing with black-beaded eyes,  
Till the lightning laughter dimple  
The baby-roses in her cheeks ;  
Then away she flies.

Prithee weep, May Lilian !  
Gayety without eclipse  
Wearieth me, May Lilian :  
Through my very heart it thrilleth  
When from crimson-threaded lips  
Silver-treble laughter trilleth :  
Prithee weep, May Lilian.

Praying all I can,  
If prayers will not hush thee,  
Airy Lilian,  
Like a rose-leaf I will crush thee,  
Fairy Lilian.

## I S A B E L .

EYES not down-dropt nor over-bright, but fed  
With the clear-pointed flame of chastity,  
Clear without heat, undying, tended by  
Pure vestal thoughts in the translucent fane  
Of her still spirit ; locks not wide dispread,  
Madonna-wise on either side her head ;  
Sweet lips whereon perpetually did reign  
The summer calm of golden charity,  
Were fixed shadows of thy fixed mood,  
Revered Isabel, the crown and head,  
The stately flower of female fortitude,  
Of perfect wifehood and pure lowlihead.

The intuitive decision of a bright  
And thorough-edged intellect to part  
Error from crime ; a prudence to withhold ;  
The laws of marriage charactered in gold  
Upon the blanched tablets of her heart ;  
A love still burning upward, giving light  
To read those laws ; an accent very low  
In blandishment, but a most silver flow  
Of subtle-paced counsel in distress,  
Right to the heart and brain, though undescried,  
Winning its way with extreme gentleness  
Through all the outworks of suspicious pride ;  
A courage to endure and to obey ;  
A hate of gossip parlance, and of sway,  
Crowned Isabel, through all her placid life,  
The queen of marriage, a most perfect wife.

The mellowed reflex of a winter moon ;  
A clear stream flowing with a muddy one,  
Till in its onward current it absorbs  
With swifter movement and in purer light  
The vexed eddies of its wayward brother :  
A leaning and upbearing parasite,  
Clothing the stem, which else had fallen quite,

With clustered flower-bells and ambrosial orbs  
 Of rich fruit-bunches leaning on each other—  
 Shadow forth thee :—the world hath not another  
 (Though all her fairest forms are types of thee,  
 And thou of God in thy great charity,)  
 Of such a finished chastened purity.

## M A R I A N A .

“ Mariana in the moated grange.”—*Measure for Measure*.

## I.

With blackest moss the flower-plots  
 Were thickly crusted, one and all :  
 The rusted nails fell from the knots  
 That held the peach to the garden-wall.  
 The broken sheds looked sad and strange :  
 Unlifted was the clinking latch ;  
 Weeded and worn the ancient thatch  
 Upon the lonely moated grange.  
 She only said, “ My life is dreary,  
 He cometh not,” she said ;  
 She said, “ I am aweary, aweary,  
 I would that I were dead ! ”

## II.

Her tears fell with the dews at even ;  
 Her tears fell ere the dews were dried ;  
 She could not look on the sweet heaven,  
 Either at morn or eventide.  
 After the flitting of the bats,  
 When thickest dark did trance the sky,  
 She drew her casement-curtain by,  
 And glanced athwart the glooming flats.  
 She only said, “ The night is dreary,  
 He cometh not,” she said ;  
 She said, “ I am aweary, aweary,  
 I would that I were dead ! ”

III.

Upon the middle of the night,  
 Waking she heard the night-fowl crow :  
 The cock sung out an hour ere light :  
 From the dark fen the oxen's low  
 Came to her : without hope of change,  
 In sleep she seemed to walk forlorn,  
 Till cold winds woke the gray-eyed morn  
 About the lonely moated grange.  
 She only said, " The day is dreary,  
 He cometh not," she said ;  
 She said, " I am aweary, aweary,  
 I would that I were dead ! "

IV.

About a stone-cast from the wall  
 A sluice with blackened waters slept,  
 And o'er it many, round and small,  
 The clustered marish-mosses crept.  
 Hard by a poplar shook alway,  
 All silver-green with gnarled bark :  
 For leagues no other tree did mark  
 The level waste, the rounding gray.  
 She only said, " My life is dreary,  
 He cometh not," she said ;  
 She said, " I am aweary, aweary,  
 I would that I were dead ! "

V.

And ever when the moon was low,  
 And the shrill winds were up and away,  
 In the white curtain, to and fro,  
 She saw the gusty shadow sway.  
 But when the moon was very low,  
 And wild winds bound within their cell,  
 The shadow of the poplar fell  
 Upon her bed, across her brow.  
 She only said, " The night is dreary,  
 He cometh not," she said ;

She said, "I am aweary, aweary,  
I would that I were dead!"

## VI.

All day within the dreamy house  
The doors upon their hinges creaked ;  
The blue fly sung i' the pane ; the mouse  
Behind the mouldering wainscot shrieked,  
Or from the crevice peered about.  
Old faces glimmered through the doors,  
Old footsteps trod the upper floors,  
Old voices called her from without.  
She only said, "My life is dreary,  
He cometh not," she said ;  
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,  
I would that I were dead!"

## VII.

The sparrow's chirrup on the roof,  
The slow clock ticking, and the sound  
Which to the wooing wind aloof  
The poplar made, did all confound  
Her sense ; but most she loathed the hour  
When the thick-moted sunbeam lay  
Athwart the chambers, and the day  
Was sloping toward his western bower.  
Then, said she, "I am very dreary,  
He will not come," she said ;  
She wept, "I am aweary, aweary,  
O God ! that I were dead!"

## TO ———.

CLEAR-HEADED friend, whose joyful scorn,  
Edged with sharp laughter, cuts atwain  
The knots that tangle human creeds,  
The wounding cords that bind and strain

The heart until it bleeds,  
 Ray-fringed eyelids of the morn  
 Roof not a glance so keen as thine :  
 If aught of prophecy be mine,  
 Thou wilt not live in vain.

Low-cowering shall the Sophist sit ;  
 Falsehood shall bare her plaited brow :  
 Fair-fronted 'Truth shall droop not now  
 With shrilling shafts of subtle wit.  
 Nor martyr-flames nor trenchant swords  
 Can do away that ancient lie :  
 A gentler death shall Falsehood die,  
 Shot through and through with cunning words.

Weak Truth, a-leaning on her crutch,  
 Wan, wasted Truth, in her utmost need,  
 Thy kingly intellect shall feed,  
 Until she be an athlete bold,  
 And weary with a finger's touch  
 Those writhed limbs of lightning speed ;  
 Like that strange angel which of old,  
 Until the breaking of the light,  
 Wrestled with wandering Israel,  
 Past Yabbok brook the livelong night,  
 And heaven's mazed signs stood still  
 In the dim tract of Penueel.

## MADELINE.

THOU art not steeped in golden languors,  
 No tranced summer calm is thine,  
 Ever varying Madeline.  
 Through light and shadow thou dost range,  
 Sudden glances, sweet and strange,  
 Delicious spites, and darling angers,  
 And airy forms of flitting change.

Smiling, frowning, evermore,  
Thou art perfect in love-lore.  
Revealings deep and clear are thine  
Of wealthy smiles: but who may know  
Whether smile or frown be fleeter?  
Whether smile or frown be sweeter,  
Who may know?

Frowns perfect-sweet along the brow  
Light-glooming over eyes divine,  
Like little clouds sun-fringed, are thine,  
Ever varying Madeline.  
Thy smile and frown are not aloof  
From one another,  
Each to each is dearest brother;  
Hues of the silken sheeny woof  
Momently shot into each other.  
All the mystery is thine;  
Smiling, frowning, evermore,  
Thou art perfect in love-lore,  
Ever varying Madeline.

A subtle, sudden flame,  
By veering passion fanned,  
About thee breaks and dances;  
When I would kiss thy hand,  
The flush of angered shame  
O'erflows thy calmer glances,  
And o'er black brows drops down  
A sudden-curved frown:  
But when I turn away,  
Thou, willing me to stay,

Woorest not, nor vainly wranglest,  
But, looking fixedly the while,  
All my bounding heart entanglest  
In a golden-netted smile;  
Then in madness and in bliss,  
If my lips should dare to kiss

Thy taper fingers amorously,  
 Again thou blushest angerly;  
 And o'er black brows drops down  
 A sudden-curved frown.

## SONG.—THE OWL.

WHEN cats run home and light is come,  
 And dew is cold upon the ground,  
 And the far-off stream is dumb,  
 And the whirring sail goes round,  
 And the whirring sail goes round;  
 Alone and warming his five wits  
 The white owl in the belfry sits.

When merry milkmaids click the latch,  
 And rarely smells the new-mown hay,  
 And the cock hath sung beneath the thatch  
 Twice or thrice his roundelay,  
 Twice or thrice his roundelay;  
 Alone and warming his five wits  
 The white owl in the belfry sits.

## SECOND SONG.

TO THE SAME.

THY tuwhits are lulled, I wot,  
 Thy tuwhoos of yesternight,  
 Which upon the dark afloat,  
 So took echo with delight,  
 So took echo with delight,  
 That her voice, untuneful grown,  
 Wears all day a fainter tone.



I would mock thy chant anew ;  
 But I cannot mimic it ;  
 Not a whit of thy tuwhoo,  
   Thee to woo to thy tuwhit,  
   Thee to woo to thy tuwhit,  
     With a lengthened loud halloo,  
     Tuwhoo, tuwhit, tuwhit, tuwhoo-o-o.

RECOLLECTIONS  
 OF  
 THE ARABIAN NIGHTS.

I.

WHEN the breeze of a joyful dawn blew free  
 In the silken sail of infancy,  
 The tide of time flowed back with me,  
   The forward-flowing tide of time ;  
 And many a sheeny summer-morn,  
 Adown the Tigris I was borne,  
 By Bagdat's shrines of fretted gold,  
 High-walled gardens green and old ;  
 True Mussulman was I and sworn,  
   For it was in the golden prime  
   Of good Haroun Alraschid.

II.

Anight my shallop, rustling through  
 The low and bloomed foliage, drove  
 The fragrant, glistening deeps, and clove  
 The citron-shadows in the blue :  
 By garden porches on the brim,  
 The costly doors flung open wide,  
 Gold glittering through lamplight dim,  
 And broidered sofas on each side :  
   In sooth it was a goodly time,  
   For it was in the golden prime  
   Of good Haroun Alraschid.

## III.

Often, where clear-stemmed platans guard  
The outlet, did I turn away  
The boat-head down a broad canal  
From the main river sluiced, where all  
The sloping of the moonlit sward  
Was damask-work, and deep inlay  
Of braided blooms unmown, which crept  
Adown to where the waters slept.  
A goodly place, a goodly time,  
For it was in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

## IV.

A motion from the river won  
Ridged the smooth level, bearing on  
My shallop through the star-strown calm,  
Until another night in night  
I entered, from the clearer light,  
Imbowered vaults of pillared palm,  
Imprisoning sweets, which, as they clomb  
Heavenward, were stayed beneath the dome  
Of hollow boughs.— A goodly time,  
For it was in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

## V.

Still onward ; and the clear canal  
Is rounded to as clear a lake.  
From the green rivage many a fall  
Of diamond rillels musical,  
Through little crystal arches low  
Down from the central fountain's flow  
Fallen silver-chiming, seemed to shake  
The sparkling flints beneath the prow.  
A goodly place, a goodly time,  
For it was in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

## VI.

Above through many a bowery turn  
A walk with vary-colored shells  
Wandered engrained. On either side  
All round about the fragrant marge  
From fluted vase, and brazen urn,  
In order, eastern flowers large,  
Some dropping low their crimson bells  
Half-closed, and others studded wide  
With disks and tiars, fed the time  
With odor in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

## VII.

Far off, and where the lemon-grove  
In closest coverture upsprung,  
The living airs of middle night  
Died round the bulbul as he sung ;  
Not he : but something which possessed  
The darkness of the world, delight,  
Life, anguish, death, immortal love,  
Ceasing not, mingled, unrepressed,  
Apart from place, withholding time,  
But flattering the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

## VIII.

Black the garden-bowers and grots  
Slumbered : the solemn palms were ranged  
Above, unwooded of summer wind :  
A sudden splendor from behind  
Flushed all the leaves with rich gold-green,  
And, flowing rapidly between  
Their interspaces, counterchanged  
The level lake with diamond-plots  
Of dark and bright. A lovely time,  
For it was in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

## IX.

Dark-blue the deep sphere overhead,  
Distinct with vivid stars inlaid,  
Grew darker from that under-flame :  
So, leaping lightly from the boat,  
With silver anchor left afloat,  
In marvel whence that glory came  
Upon me, as in sleep I sank  
In cool soft turf upon the bank,  
    Entrancéd with that place and time,  
    So worthy of the golden prime  
    Of good Haroun Alraschid.

## X.

Thence through the garden I was drawn,—  
A realm of pleasance, many a mound,  
And many a shadow-chequered lawn  
Full of the city's stilly sound,  
And deep myrrh-thickets blowing round.  
The stately cedar, tamarisks,  
Thick rosaries of scented thorn,  
Tall orient shrubs, and obelisks  
    Graven with emblems of the time,  
    In honor of the golden prime  
    Of good Haroun Alraschid.

## XI.

With dazéd vision unawares  
From the long alley's lattice shade  
Emerged, I came upon the great  
Pavilion of the Caliphat.  
Right to the carven cedarn doors,  
Flung inward over spangled floors,  
Broad-based flights of marble stairs  
Ran up with golden balustrade,  
    After the fashion of the time  
    And humor of the golden prime  
    Of good Haroun Alraschid.

## XII.

The fourscore windows all alight  
As with the quintessence of flame,  
A million tapers flaring bright  
From twisted silvers looked to shame  
The hollow-vaulted dark, and streamed  
Upon the mooned domes aloof  
In inmost Bagdat, till there seemed  
Hundreds of crescents on the roof  
Of night new risen, that marvellous time,  
To celebrate the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

## XIII.

Then stole I up, and trancedly  
Gazed on the Persian girl alone,  
Serene with argent-lidded eyes,  
Amorous, and lashes like to rays  
Of darkness, and a brow of pearl  
Tressed with redolent ebony,  
In many a dark delicious curl,  
Flowing beneath her rose-hued zone ;  
The sweetest lady of the time,  
Well worthy of the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

## XIV.

Six columns, three on either side,  
Pure silver, underpropt a rich  
Throne of the massive ore, from which  
Down-drooped, in many a floating fold,  
Engarlanded and diapered  
With inwrought flowers, a cloth of gold.  
Thereon, his deep eye laughter-stirred  
With merriment of kingly pride,  
Sole star of all that place and time,  
I saw him—in his golden prime,  
THE GOOD HAROUN ALRASCHID!

## ODE TO MEMORY.

## I.

THOU who stealest fire,  
From the fountains of the past,  
To glorify the present ; oh, haste,  
Visit my low desire !  
Strengthen me, enlighten me !  
I faint in this obscurity,  
Thou dewy dawn of memory.

## II.

Come not as thou camest of late,  
Flinging the gloom of yesternight  
On the white day ; but robed in softened light  
Of orient state.  
Whilome thou camest with the morning mist,  
Even as a maid, whose stately brow  
The dew-impearled winds of dawn have kissed,  
When she, as thou,  
Stays on her floating locks the lovely freight  
Of overflowing blooms, and earliest shoots  
Of orient green, giving safe pledge of fruits,  
Which in wintertide shall star  
The black earth with brilliance rare.

## III.

Whilome thou camest with the morning mist,  
And with the evening cloud,  
Showering thy gleaned wealth into my open breast,  
(Those peerless flowers which in the rudest wind  
Never grow sere,  
When rooted in the garden of the mind,  
Because they are the earliest of the year.)  
Nor was the night thy shroud.  
In sweet dreams softer than unbroken rest  
Thou leddest by the hand thy infant Hope.  
The eddying of her garments caught from thee

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The light of thy great presence ; and the cope  
Of the half-attained futurity,  
Though deep, not fathomless,  
Was cloven with the million stars that tremble  
O'er the deep mind of dauntless infancy.  
Small thought was there of life's distress ;  
For sure she deemed no mist of earth could dull  
Those spirit-thrilling eyes so keen and beautiful :  
Sure she was nigher to heaven's spheres,  
Listening the lordly music flowing from  
The illimitable years.  
O strengthen me, enlighten me !  
I faint in this obscurity,  
Thou dewy dawn of memory.

## IV.

Come forth, I charge thee, arise,  
Thou of the many tongues, the myriad eyes !  
Thou comest not with shows of flaunting vines  
Unto mine inner eye,  
Divinest memory !  
Thou wert not nursed by the waterfall  
Which ever sounds and shines  
A pillar of white light upon the wall  
Of purple cliffs, aloof descried :  
Come from the woods that belt the gray hill-side  
The seven elms, the poplars four,  
That stand beside my father's door,  
And chiefly from the brook that loves  
To purl o'er matted cress and ribbed sand,  
Or dimple in the dark of rushy coves,  
Drawing into his narrow earthen urn,  
In every elbow and turn,  
The filtered tribute of the rough woodland.  
O ! hither lead thy feet !  
Pour round mine ears the livelong bleat  
Of the thick-fleeced sheep from wattled folds,  
Upon the ridged wolds,  
When the first matin-song hath wakened loud

Over the dark dewy earth forlorn,  
What time the amber morn  
Forth gushes from beneath a low-hung cloud.

## v.

Large dowries doth the raptured eye  
To the young spirit present  
When first she is wed ;  
And like a bride of old  
In triumph led,  
With music and sweet showers  
Of festal flowers,  
Unto the dwelling she must sway.  
Well hast thou done, great artist Memory,  
In setting round thy first experiment  
With royal framework of wrought gold ;  
Needs must thou dearly love thy first essay,  
And foremost in thy various gallery  
Place it, where sweetest sunlight falls  
Upon the storied walls ;  
For the discovery  
And newness of thine art so pleased thee,  
That all which thou hast drawn of fairest  
Or boldest since, but lightly weighs  
With thee unto the love thou bearest  
The first-born of thy genius. Artist-like,  
Ever retiring thou dost gaze  
On the prime labor of thine early days :  
No matter what the sketch might be ;  
Whether the high field on the bushless Pike,  
Or even a sand-built ridge  
Of heaped hills that mound the sea,  
Overblown with murmurs harsh,  
Or even a lowly cottage whence we see  
Stretched wide and wild the waste enormous  
marsh,  
Where from the frequent bridge,  
Like emblems of infinity,  
The trenchéd waters run from sky to sky ;



Or a garden bowered close  
With plaited alleys of the trailing rose,  
Long alleys falling down to twilight grots,  
Or opening upon level plots  
Of crowned lilies, standing near  
Purple-spiked lavender :  
Whether in after life retired  
From brawling storms,  
From weary wind,  
With youthful fancy re-inspired,  
We may hold converse with all forms  
Of the many-sided mind,  
And those whom passion had not blinded,  
Subtle-thoughted, myriad-minded,  
My friend, with you to live alone,  
Were how much better than to own  
A crown, a sceptre, and a throne.  
O strengthen me, enlighten me !  
I faint in this obscurity,  
Thou dewy dawn of memory.

## SONG.

## I.

A SPIRIT haunts the year's last hours,  
Dwelling amid these yellowing bowers :  
    To himself he talks ;  
For at eventide, listening earnestly,  
At his work you may hear him sob and sigh  
    In the walks ;  
    Earthward he boweth the heavy stalks  
Of the mouldering flowers :  
    Heavily hangs the broad sunflower  
    Over its grave i' the earth so chilly ;  
    Heavily hangs the hollyhock,  
    Heavily hangs the tiger-lily.

## II.

The air is damp, and hushed, and close,  
 As a sick man's room when he taketh repose  
     An hour before death ;  
 My very heart faints and my whole soul grieves  
 At the moist rich smell of the rotting leaves,  
     And the breath  
     Of the fading edges of box beneath,  
 And the year's last rose.  
     Heavily hangs the broad sunflower  
     Over its grave i' the earth so chilly ;  
     Heavily hangs the hollyhock,  
     Heavily hangs the tiger-lily.

## ADELINE.

MYSTERY of mysteries,  
     Faintly smiling Adeline,  
     Scarce of earth nor all divine,  
     Nor unhappy, nor at rest,  
     But beyond expression fair,  
     With thy floating flaxen hair ;  
 Thy rose-lips and full blue eyes  
     Take the heart from out my breast.  
     Wherefore those dim looks of thine,  
     Shadowy, dreaming Adeline ?

Whence that aery bloom of thine,  
     Like a lily which the sun  
 Looks through in his sad decline,  
     And a rose-bush leans upon,  
 Thou that faintly smilest still,  
     As a Naiad in a well,  
     Looking at the set of day,  
 Or a phantom two hours old  
     Of a maiden past away,

Ere the placid lips be cold ?  
Wherefore those faint smiles of thine,  
Spiritual Adeline ?

What hope or fear or joy is thine ?  
Who talketh with thee, Adeline ?  
For sure thou art not all alone :  
Do beating hearts of salient springs  
Keep measure with thine own ?  
Hast thou heard the butterflies  
What they say betwixt their wings ?  
Or in stillest evenings  
With what voice the violet woos  
To his heart the silver dews ?  
Or when little airs arise,  
How the merry bluebell rings  
To the mosses underneath ?  
Hast thou looked upon the breath  
Of the lilies at sunrise ?  
Wherefore that faint smile of thine,  
Shadowy, dreaming Adeline ?

Some honey-converse feeds thy mind,  
Some spirit of a crimson rose  
In love with thee forgets to close  
His curtains, wasting odorous sighs  
All night long on darkness blind.  
What aileth thee ? whom waitest thou  
With thy softened, shadowed brow,  
And those dew-lit eyes of thine,  
Thou faint smiler, Adeline ?

Lovest thou the doleful wind  
When thou gazest at the skies ?  
Doth the low-tongued Orient  
Wander from the side o' the morn,  
Dripping with Sabæan spice  
On thy pillow, lowly bent  
With melodious airs lovelorn,

Breathing light against thy face,  
While his locks a-dropping twined  
Round thy neck in subtle ring  
Make a carcanet of rays  
And ye talk together still,  
In the language wherewith Spring  
Letters cowslips on the hill?  
Hence that look and smile of thine,  
Spiritual Adeline.

## A CHARACTER.

## I.

WITH a half-glance upon the sky  
At night he said, "The wanderings  
Of this most intricate Universe  
Teach me the nothingness of things."  
Yet could not all creation pierce  
Beyond the bottom of his eye.

## II.

He spake of beauty: that the dull  
Saw no divinity in grass,  
Life in dead stones, or spirit in air;  
Then looking as 'twere in a glass,  
He smoothed his chin and sleeked his hair,  
And said the earth was beautiful.

## III.

He spake of virtue: not the gods  
More purely, when they wish to charm  
Pallas and Juno sitting by:  
And with a sweeping of the arm,  
And a lack-lustre dead-blue eye,  
Devolved his rounded periods.

## IV.

Most delicately hour by hour  
 He canvassed human mysteries,  
 And trod on silk, as if the winds  
 Blew his own praises in his eyes,  
 And stood aloof from other minds  
 In impotence of fancied power.

## V.

With lips depressed as he were meek,  
 Himself unto himself he sold :  
 Upon himself himself did feed :  
 Quiet, dispassionate, and cold,  
 And other than his form of creed,  
 With chiselled features clear and sleek.

## THE POET

THE poet in a golden clime was born,  
 With golden stars above ;  
 Dowered with the hate of hate, the scorn of scorn,  
 The love of love.

He saw through life and death, through good and ill,  
 He saw through his own soul.  
 The marvel of the everlasting will,  
 An open scroll,

Before him lay : with echoing feet he threaded  
 The secret'st walks of fame :  
 The viewless arrows of his thoughts were headed  
 And winged with flame,

Like Indian reeds blown from his silver tongue,  
 And of so fierce a flight,  
 From Calpe unto Caucasus they sung,  
 Filling with light

And vagrant melodies the winds which bore  
Them earthward till they lit ;  
Then, like the arrow-seeds of the field-flower,  
The fruitful wit,

Cleaving, took root, and springing forth anew  
Where'er they fell, behold,  
Like to the mother plant in semblance, grew  
A flower all gold,

And bravely furnished all abroad to fling  
The winged shafts of truth,  
To throng with stately blooms the breathing spring  
Of Hope and Youth.

So many minds did gird their orbs with beams,  
Though one did fling the fire.  
Heaven flowed upon the soul in many dreams  
Of high desire.

Thus truth was multiplied on truth, the world  
Like one great garden showed,  
And through the wreaths of floating dark upcurled  
Rare sunrise flowed.

And Freedom reared in that august sunrise  
Her beautiful bold brow,  
When rites and forms before his burning eyes  
Melted like snow.

There was no blood upon her maiden robes  
Sunned by those orient skies ;  
But round about the circles of the globes  
Of her keen eyes

And in her raiment's hem was traced in flame  
WISDOM, a name to shake  
All evil dreams of power,—a sacred name.  
And when she spake,

Her words did gather thunder as they ran,  
And as the lightning to the thunder  
Which follows it, riving the spirit of man,  
Making earth wonder,

So was their meaning to her words. No sword  
Of wrath her right arm whirled,  
But one poor poet's scroll, and with *his* word  
She shook the world.

## THE POET'S MIND.

### I.

VEX not thou the poet's mind  
With thy shallow wit :  
Vex not thou the poet's mind ;  
For thou canst not fathom it.  
Clear and bright it should be ever,  
Flowing like a crystal river ;  
Bright as light, and clear as wind.

### II.

Dark-browed sophist, come not anear ;  
All the place is holy ground ;  
Hollow smile and frozen sneer  
Come not here.  
Holy water will I pour  
Into every spicy flower  
Of the laurel-shrubs that hedge it around.  
The flowers would faint at your cruel cheer.  
In your eye there is death,  
There is frost in your breath  
Which would blight the plants.  
Where you stand you cannot hear  
From the groves within  
The wild-bird's din.  
In the heart of the garden the merry bird chants,

It would fall to the ground if you came in.  
In the middle leaps a fountain  
Like sheet lightning,  
Ever brightening  
With a low melodious thunder;  
All day and all night it is ever drawn  
From the brain of the purple mountain  
Which stands in the distance yonder:  
It springs on a level of bowery lawn,  
And the mountain draws it from Heaven above,  
And it sings a song of undying love;  
And yet, though its voice be so clear and full,  
You never would hear it—your ears are so dull;  
So keep where you are: you are foul with sin;  
It would shrink to the earth if you came in.

## THE DYING SWAN.

THE plain was grassy, wild and bare,  
Wide, wild, and open to the air,  
Which had built up everywhere  
An under-roof of doleful gray.  
With an inner voice the river ran,  
Adown it floated a dying swan,  
And loudly did lament.  
It was the middle of the day.  
Ever the weary wind went on,  
And took the reed-tops as it went.

Some blue peaks in the distance rose,  
And white against the cold-white sky  
Shone out their crowning snows.  
One willow over the river wept,  
And shook the wave as the wind did sigh;  
Above in the wind was the swallow,  
Chasing itself as its own wild will,  
And far through the marish green and still



The tangled watercourses slept,  
Shot over with purple, and green, and yellow,

The wild swan's death-hymn took the soul  
Of that waste place with joy  
Hidden in sorrow : at first to the ear  
The warble was low, and full and clear ;  
And floating about the under-sky,  
Prevailing in weakness, the coronach stole  
Sometimes afar, and sometimes anear ;  
But anon her awful jubilant voice,  
With a music strange and manifold,  
Flowed forth on a carol free and bold :  
As when a mighty people rejoice  
With shawms, and with cymbals, and harps of gold.  
And the tumult of their acclaim is rolled  
Through the open gates of the city afar,  
To the shepherd who watcheth the evening star.  
And the creeping mosses and clambering weeds,  
And the willow-branches hoar and dank,  
And the wavy swell of the sougling reeds,  
And the wave-worn horns of the echoing bank,  
And the silvery marish-flowers that throng  
The desolate creeks and pools among,  
Were flooded over with eddying song.

## A DIRGE.

### I.

Now is done thy long day's work ;  
Fold thy palms across thy breast,  
Fold thine arms, turn to thy rest.  
Let them rave.  
Shadows of the silver birk  
Sweep the green that folds thy grave.  
Let them rave.

## II.

Thee nor carketh care nor slander ;  
 Nothing but the small cold worm  
 Fretteth thine enshrouded form.

Let them rave.

Light and shadow ever wander  
 O'er the green that folds thy grave.

Let them rave.

## III.

Thou wilt not turn upon thy bed ;  
 Chanteth not the brooding bee  
 Sweeter tones than calumny ?

Let them rave.

Thou wilt never raise thine head  
 From the green that folds thy grave.

Let them rave.

## IV.

Crocodiles wept tears for thee ;  
 The woodbine and eglatere  
 Drip sweeter dews than traitor's tear.

Let them rave.

Rain makes music in the tree  
 O'er the green that folds thy grave.

Let them rave.

## V.

Round thee blow, self-pleached deep  
 Bramble-roses, faint and pale,  
 And long purples of the dale.

Let them rave.

These in every shower creep  
 Through the green that folds thy grave.

Let them rave.

## VI.

The gold-eyed kingcups fine,  
 The frail bluebell peereth over

Rare broidry of the purple clover.  
Let them rave.  
Kings have no such couch as thine,  
As the green that folds thy grave.  
Let them rave.

## VII.

Wild words wander here and there ;  
God's great gift of speech abused  
Makes thy memory confused—  
But let them rave.  
The balm-cricket carols clear  
In the green that folds thy grave.  
Let them rave.

## LOVE AND DEATH.

WHAT time the mighty moon was gathering light,  
Love paced the thymy plots of Paradise,  
And all about him rolled his lustrous eyes ;  
When, turning round a cassia, full in view  
Death, walking all alone beneath a yew,  
And talking to himself, first met his sight :  
" You must begone," said Death ; " these walks are  
mine."

Love wept and spread his sheeny vans for flight ;  
Yet ere he parted said, " This hour is thine ;  
Thou art the shadow of life, and as the tree  
Stands in the sun and shadows all beneath,  
So in the light of great eternity  
Life eminent creates the shade of death ;  
The shadow passeth when the tree shall fall,  
But I shall reign forever over all."

## THE BALLAD OF ORIANA.

My heart is wasted with my woe,  
Oriana.

There is no rest for me below,  
Oriana.

When the long dun wolds are ribbed with snow,  
And loud the Norland whirlwinds blow,  
Oriana,

Alone I wander to and fro,  
Oriana.

Ere the light on dark was growing,  
Oriana,

At midnight the cock was crowing,  
Oriana :

Winds were blowing, waters flowing,  
We heard the steeds to battle going,  
Oriana ;

Aloud the hollow bugle blowing,  
Oriana.

In the yew-wood, black as night,  
Oriana,

Ere I rode into the fight,  
Oriana,

While blissful tears blinded my sight,  
By star-shine and by moonlight,  
Oriana,

I to thee my troth did plight,  
Oriana.

She stood upon the castle wall,  
Oriana :

She watched my crest among them all,  
Oriana :

She saw me fight, she heard me call,  
When forth there stept a foeman tall,  
Oriana,

Atween me and the castle wall,  
Oriana.

The bitter arrow went aside,  
Oriana :  
The false, false arrow went aside,  
Oriana :  
The damned arrow glanced aside,  
And pierced thy heart, my love, my bride,  
Oriana !  
Thy heart, my life, my love, my bride,  
Oriana !

O ! narrow, narrow was the space,  
Oriana.  
Loud, loud rung out the bugle's brays,  
Oriana.  
O ! deathful stabs were dealt apace,  
The battle deepened in its place,  
Oriana ;  
But I was down upon my face,  
Oriana.

They should have stabbed me where I lay,  
Oriana !  
How could I rise and come away,  
Oriana ?  
How could I look upon the day ?  
They should have stabbed me where I lay,  
Oriana—  
They should have trod me into clay,  
Oriana.

O ! breaking heart that will not break,  
Oriana ;  
O ! pale, pale face so sweet and meek,  
Oriana.  
Thou smilest, but thou dost not speak,

And then the tears run down my cheek,  
    Oriana :  
What wantest thou ? whom dost thou seek,  
    Oriana ?

I cry aloud : none hear my cries,  
    Oriana.  
Thou comest atween me and the skies,  
    Oriana.  
I feel the tears of blood arise  
Up from my heart unto my eyes,  
    Oriana.  
Within thy heart my arrow lies,  
    Oriana.

O cursed hand ! oh cursed blow !  
    Oriana !  
O happy thou that liest low,  
    Oriana !  
All night the silence seems to flow  
Beside me in my utter woe,  
    Oriana.  
A weary, weary way I go,  
    Oriana.

When Norland winds pipe down the sea,  
    Oriana,  
I walk, I dare not think of thee,  
    Oriana.  
Thou liest beneath the greenwood tree,  
I dare not die and come to thee,  
    Oriana.  
I hear the roaring of the sea,  
    Oriana.

## CIRCUMSTANCE.

Two children in two neighbor villages  
Playing mad pranks along the heathy leas ;  
Two strangers meeting at a festival ;  
Two lovers whispering by an orchard wall ;  
Two lives bound fast in one with golden ease ;  
Two graves grass-green beside a gray church-tower,  
Washed with still rains and daisy-blossomed ;  
Two children in one hamlet born and bred ;  
So runs the round of life from hour to hour.

## THE MERMAN.

Who would be  
A merman bold  
Sitting alone,  
Singing alone  
Under the sea,  
With a crown of gold,  
On a throne ?

I would be a merman bold ;  
I would sit and sing the whole of the day ;  
I would fill the sea-halls with a voice of power,  
But at night I would roam abroad, and play  
With the mermaids in and out of the rocks,  
Dressing their hair with the white sea-flower ;  
And holding them back by their flowing locks,  
I would kiss them often under the sea,  
And kiss them again till they kissed me  
Laughingly, laughingly ;  
And then we would wander away, away  
To the pale-green sea-groves straight and high,  
Chasing each other merrily.

There would be neither moon nor star ;  
But the wave would make music above us afar—  
Low thunder and light in the magic night—

Neither moon nor star.

We would call aloud in the dreamy dells,  
Call to each other and whoop and cry

All night, merrily, merrily ;

They would pelt me with starry spangles and shells  
Laughing and clapping their hands between,

All night, merrily, merrily ;

But I would throw them back in mine

Turkis and agate and almondine :

Then leaping out upon them unseen,

I would kiss them often under the sea,

And kiss them again till they kissed me

Laughingly, laughingly.

O ! what a happy life were mine

Under the hollow-hung ocean green !

Soft are the moss-beds under the sea ;

We would live merrily, merrily.

## THE MERMAID.

Who would be  
A mermaid fair,  
Singing alone,  
Combing her hair  
Under the sea,  
In a golden curl  
With a comb of pearl,  
On a throne ?

I would be a mermaid fair ;  
I would sing to myself the whole of the day ;  
With a comb of pearl I would comb my hair ;  
And still as I combed I would sing and say,  
“ Who is it loves me ? who loves not me ? ”



I would comb my hair till my ringlets would fall,  
    Low adown, low adown,  
From under my starry sea-bud crown  
    Low adown and around,  
And I should look like a fountain of gold  
    Springing alone  
    With a shrill inner sound,  
    Over the throne  
    In the midst of the hall ;  
Till that great sea-snake under the sea  
From his coiled sleeps in the central deeps  
Would slowly trail himself sevenfold  
Round the hall where I sate, and look in at the gate  
With his large calm eyes for the love of me.  
And all the mermen under the sea  
Would feel their immortality  
Die in their hearts for the love of me.

But at night I would wander away, away,  
    I would fling on each side my low-flowing locks  
And lightly vault from the throne and play  
    With the mermen in and out of the rocks ;  
We would run to and fro, and hide and seek,  
    On the broad sea-wolds i' the crimson shells,  
    Whose silvery spikes are nighest the sea.  
But if any came near, I would call and shriek,  
And adown the steep like a wave I would leap  
    From the diamond ledges that jut from the dells.  
For I would not be kissed by all who would list,  
Of the bold merry mermen under the sea ;  
They would sue me, and woo me, and flatter me,  
In the purple twilights under the sea ;  
But the king of them all would carry me,  
Woo me, and win me, and marry me,  
In the branching jaspers under the sea ;  
Then all the dry pied things that be  
In the hueless mosses under the sea  
Would curl round my silver feet silently,  
All looking up for the love of me.

And if I should carol aloud, from aloft  
All things that are forked, and horned, and soft,  
Would lean out from the hollow sphere of the sea,  
All looking down for the love of me.

## SONNET TO J. M. K.

My hope and heart is with thee—thou wilt be  
A latter Luther, and a soldier-priest  
To scare church-harpies from the master's feast;  
Our dusted velvets have much need of thee :  
Thou art no sabbath-drawler of old saws,  
Distilled from some worm-cankered homily ;  
But spurred at heart with fieriest energy  
To embattail and to wall about thy cause  
With iron-worded proof, hating to hark  
The humming of the drowsy pulpit-drone  
Half God's good sabbath, while the worn-out clerk  
Brow-beats his desk below. Thou from a throne  
Mounted in heaven wilt shoot into the dark  
Arrows of lightnings. I will stand and mark.

# POEMS.

(PUBLISHED 1832.)

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## THE LADY OF SHALOTT.

### PART I.

ON either side the river lie  
Long fields of barley and of rye,  
That clothe the wold and meet the sky ;  
And through the field the road runs by  
    To many-towered Camelot ;  
And up and down the people go,  
Gazing where the lilies blow  
Round an island there below,  
    The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,  
Little breezes dusk and shiver  
Through the wave that runs forever  
By the island in the river  
    Flowing down to Camelot.  
Four gray walls, and four gray towers,  
Overlook a space of flowers,  
And the silent isle embowers  
    The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veiled,  
Slide the heavy barges trailed

By slow horses ; and unhailed,  
The shallop flitteth silken-sailed,  
    Skimming down to Camelot :  
But who hath seen her wave her hand ?  
Or at the casement seen her stand ?  
Or is she known in all the land,  
    The Lady of Shalott ?

Only reapers, reaping early  
In among the bearded barley,  
Hear a song that echoes cheerly  
From the river winding clearly,  
    Down to towered Camelot :  
And by the moon the reaper weary,  
Piling sheaves in uplands airy,  
Listening, whispers " 'Tis the fairy  
    Lady of Shalott."

## PART II.

THERE she weaves by night and day  
A magic web with colors gay.  
She has heard a whisper say,  
A curse is on her if she stay  
    To look down to Camelot.  
She knows not what the curse may be,  
And so she weaveth steadily,  
And little other care hath she,  
    The Lady of Shalott.

And moving through a mirror clear  
That hangs before her all the year,  
Shadows of the world appear.  
There she sees the highway near  
    Winding down to Camelot :  
There the river eddy whirls,  
And there the surly village-churls,  
And the red cloaks of market-girls,  
    Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,  
 An abbot on an ambling pad,  
 Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,  
 Or long-haired page in crimson clad,  
     Goes by to towered Camelot ;  
 And sometimes through the mirror blue  
 The knights come riding two and two :  
 She hath no loyal knight and true,  
     The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights  
 To weave the mirror's magic sights,  
 For often through the silent nights  
 A funeral, with plumes and lights,  
     And music, went to Camelot :  
 Or when the moon was overhead,  
 Came two young lovers lately wed ;  
 " I am half-sick of shadows," said  
     The Lady of Shalott.

## PART III.

A BOW-SHOT from her bower-eaves,  
 He rode between the barley sheaves,  
 The sun came dazzling through the leaves,  
 And flamed upon the brazen greaves  
     Of bold Sir Lancelot.  
 A redcross knight forever kneeled  
 To a lady in his shield,  
 That sparkled on the yellow field,  
     Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glittered free,  
 Like to some branch of stars we see  
 Hung in the golden Galaxy.  
 The bridle bells rang merrily  
     As he rode down to Camelot :  
 And from his blazoned baldric slung  
 A mighty silver bugle hung,

And as he rode his armor rung,  
Beside remote Shalott.

All in the blue unclouded weather  
Thick-jewelled shone the saddle-leather,  
The helmet and the helmet-feather  
Burned like one burning flame together,

As he rode down to Camelot.  
As often through the purple night,  
Below the starry clusters bright,  
Some bearded meteor, trailing light,  
Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight glowed ;  
On burnished hooves his war-horse trode ;  
From underneath his helmet flowed  
His coal-black curls as on he rode,

As he rode down to Camelot.  
From the bank and from the river  
He flashed into the crystal mirror,  
" Tirra lirra," by the river  
Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom,  
She made three paces through the room,  
She saw the water-lily bloom,  
She saw the helmet and the plume,  
She looked down to Camelot.

Out flew the web and floated wide ;  
The mirror cracked from side to side ;  
" The curse is come upon me," cried  
The Lady of Shalott.

#### PART IV.

IN the stormy east-wind straining,  
The pale yellow woods were waning,  
The broad stream in his banks complaining,  
Heavily the low sky raining  
Over towered Camelot ;

Down she came and found a boat  
Beneath a willow left afloat,  
And round about the prow she wrote  
*The Lady of Shalott.*

And down the river's dim expanse—  
Like some bold seër in a trance,  
Seeing all his own mischance—  
With a glassy countenance  
Did she look to Camelot.  
And at the closing of the day  
She loosed the chain, and down she lay;  
The broad stream bore her far away,  
The Lady of Shalott.

Lying, robed in snowy white  
That loosely flew to left and right—  
The leaves upon her falling light—  
Through the noises of the night  
She floated down to Camelot:  
And as the boat-head wound along  
The willowy hills and fields among,  
They heard her singing her last song,  
The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,  
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,  
Till her blood was frozen slowly,  
And her eyes were darkened wholly,  
Turned to towered Camelot;  
For ere she reached upon the tide  
The first house by the water-side,  
Singing in her song she died,  
The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,  
By garden-wall and gallery,  
A gleaming shape she floated by,  
Dead-pale between the houses high,  
Silent into Camelot.

Out upon the wharves they came,  
 Knight and burgher, lord and dame,  
 And round the prow they read her name,  
     *The Lady of Shalott.*

Who is this? and what is here?  
 And in the lighted palace near  
 Died the sound of royal cheer;  
 And they crossed themselves for fear,  
     All the knights at Camelot:  
 But Lancelot mused a little space;  
 He said, "She has a lovely face;  
 God in his mercy lend her grace,  
     The Lady of Shalott."

MARIANA IN THE SOUTH.

I.

With one black shadow at its feet,  
 The house through all the level shines,  
 Close-latticed to the brooding heat,  
 And silent in its dusty vines:  
 A faint-blue ridge upon the right,  
 An empty river-bed before,  
 And shallows on a distant shore,  
 In glaring sand and inlets bright.  
     But "Ave Mary," made she moan,  
     And "Ave Mary," night and morn,  
     And "Ah," she sang, "to be all alone,  
     To live forgotten, and love forlorn."

II.

She, as her carol sadder grew,  
 From brow and bosom slowly down,  
 Through rosy taper fingers drew.  
 Her streaming curls of deepest brown  
 To left and right, and made appear,



Still-lighted in a secret shrine,  
Her melancholy eyes divine,  
The home of woe without a tear.  
And "Ave Mary," was her moan,  
"Madonna, sad is night and morn;"  
And "Ah," she sang, "to be all alone,  
To live forgotten, and love forlorn."

## III.

Till all the crimson changed, and past  
Into deep orange o'er the sea,  
Low on her knees herself she cast,  
Before Our Lady murmured she;  
Complaining, "Mother, give me grace  
To help me of my weary load."  
And on the liquid mirror glowed  
The clear perfection of her face.  
"Is this the form," she made her moan,  
"That won his praises night and morn?"  
And "Ah," she said, "but I wake alone,  
I sleep forgotten, I wake forlorn."

## IV.

Nor bird would sing, nor lamb would bleat,  
Nor any cloud would cross the vault,  
But day increased from heat to heat,  
On stony drought and steaming salt;  
Till now at noon she slept again,  
And seemed knee-deep in mountain grass,  
And heard her native breezes pass,  
And runlets babbling down the glen.  
She breathed in sleep a lower moan,  
And murmuring, as at night and morn,  
She thought, "My spirit is here alone,  
Walks forgotten, and is forlorn."

## V.

Dreaming, she knew it was a dream:  
She felt he was and was not there.

She woke : the babble of the stream  
 Fell, and without the steady glare  
 Shrank one sick willow sere and small.  
 The river-bed was dusty white ;  
 And all the furnace of the light  
 Struck up against the blinding wall.  
 She whispered, with a stifled moan  
 More inward than at night or morn,  
 " Sweet Mother, let me not here alone  
 Live forgotten, and die forlorn."

VI.

And, rising, from her bosom drew  
 Old letters, breathing of her worth,  
 For " Love," they said, " must needs be true  
 To what is loveliest upon earth."  
 An image seemed to pass the door,  
 To look at her with slight, and say,  
 " But now thy beauty flows away,  
 So be alone for evermore."  
 " O cruel heart," she changed her tone,  
 " And cruel love, whose end is scorn,  
 Is this the end to be left alone,  
 To live forgotten, and die forlorn !"

VII.

But sometimes in the falling day  
 An image seemed to pass the door,  
 To look into her eyes and say,  
 " But thou shalt be alone no more."  
 And flaming downward over all  
 From heat to heat the day decreased,  
 And slowly rounded to the east  
 The one black shadow from the wall.  
 " The day to night," she made her moan,  
 " The day to night, the night to morn,  
 And day and night I am left alone,  
 To live forgotten, and love forlorn."

## VIII.

At eve a dry cicala sung,  
 There came a sound as of the sea;  
 Backward the lattice-blind she flung,  
 And leaned upon the balcony.  
 There all in spaces rosy-bright  
 Large Hesper glittered on her tears,  
 And deepening through the silent spheres,  
 Heaven over Heaven rose the night.  
 And weeping then she made her moan,  
 "The night comes on that knows not morn,  
 When I shall cease to be all alone,  
 To live forgotten, and love forlorn."

## ELEANORE.

THY dark eyes opened not,  
 Nor first revealed themselves to English air,  
 For there is nothing here,  
 Which, from the outward to the inward brought,  
 Moulded thy baby thought.  
 Far off from human neighborhood,  
 Thou wert born, on a summer morn,  
 A mile beneath the cedar-wood.  
 Thy bounteous forehead was not fanned  
 With breezes from our oaken glades,  
 But thou wert nursed in some delicious land  
 Of lavish lights, and floating shades:  
 And flattering thy childish thought  
 The oriental fairy brought,  
 At the moment of thy birth,  
 From old well-heads of haunted rills,  
 And the hearts of purple hills,  
 And shadowed coves on a sunny shore,  
 The choicest wealth of all the earth,

Jewel or shell, or starry ore,  
To deck thy cradle, Eleänore.

Or the yellow-banded bees,  
Through half-open lattices  
Coming in the scented breeze,  
Fed thee, a child, lying alone,  
With whitest honey in fairy gardens culled  
A glorious child, dreaming alone,  
In silk-soft folds, upon yielding down,  
With the hum of swarming bees  
Into dreamful slumber lulled.

Who may minister to thee ?  
Summer herself should minister  
To thee, with fruitage golden-rinded  
On golden salvers, or it may be,  
Youngest Autumn, in a bower  
Grape-thickened from the light, and blinded  
With many a deep-hued bell-like flower  
Of fragrant trailers, when the air  
Sleepeth over all the heaven,  
And the crag that fronts the Even,  
All along the shadowing shore,  
Crimsons over an inland mere,  
Eleänore !

How may full-sailed verse express,  
How may measured words adore  
The full-flowing harmony  
Of thy swan-like stateliness,  
Eleänore ?  
The luxuriant symmetry  
Of thy floating gracefulness,  
Eleänore ?  
Every turn and glance of thine,  
Every lineament divine,  
Eleänore,  
And the steady sunset glow,

That stays upon thee? For in thee  
Is nothing sudden, nothing single;  
Like two streams of incense free  
From one censer, in one shrine,  
Thought and motion mingle,  
Mingle ever. Motions flow  
To one another, even as though  
They were modulated so  
To an unheard melody,  
Which lives about thee, and a sweep  
Of richest pauses, evermore  
Drawn from each other mellow-deep; -  
Who may express thee, Eleänore?

I stand before thee, Eleänore;  
I see thy beauty gradually unfold,  
Daily and hourly, more and more.  
I muse, as in a trance, the while  
Slowly, as from a cloud of gold,  
Comes out thy deep ambrosial smile.  
I muse, as in a trance, whene'er  
The languors of thy love-deep eyes  
Float on to me. I would I were  
So tranced, so rapt in ecstasies,  
To stand apart, and to adore,  
Gazing on thee for evermore,  
Serene, imperial Eleänore!

Sometimes, with most intensity  
Gazing, I seem to see  
Thought folded over thought, smiling asleep,  
Slowly awakened, grow so full and deep  
In thy large eyes, that, overpowered quite,  
I cannot veil, or droop my sight,  
But am as nothing in its light:  
As though a star, in inmost heaven set,  
Even while we gaze on it,  
Should slowly round his orb, and slowly grow  
To a full face, there like a sun remain

Fixed—then as slowly fade again,  
 And draw itself to what it was before ;  
 So full, so deep, so slow,  
 Thought seems to come and go  
 In thy large eyes, imperial Eleanore.

As thunderclouds that, hung on high,  
 Roofed the world with doubt and fear,  
 Floating through an evening atmosphere,  
 Grow golden all about the sky ;  
 In thee all passion becomes passionless,  
 Touched by thy spirit's mellowness,  
 Losing his fire and active might  
 In a silent meditation,  
 Falling into a still delight,  
 And luxury of contemplation :  
 As waves that up a quiet cove  
 Rolling slide, and lying still  
 Shadow forth the banks at will ;  
 Or sometimes they swell and move,  
 Pressing up against the land,  
 With motions of the outer sea :  
 And the selfsame influence  
 Controlleth all the soul and sense  
 Of Passion gazing upon thee.  
 His bowstring slackened, languid Love,  
 Leaning his cheek upon his hand,  
 Droops both his wings, regarding thee  
 And so would languish evermore,  
 Serene, imperial Eleanore.

But when I see thee roam, with tresses unconfined,  
 While the amorous, odorous wind  
 Breathes low between the sunset and the moon ;  
 Or, in a shadowy saloon,  
 On silken cushions half reclined ;  
 I watch thy grace ; and in its place  
 My heart a charmed slumber keeps,  
 While I muse upon thy face ;

And a languid fire creeps  
 Through my veins to all my frame,  
 Dissolvingly and slowly : soon,  
 From thy rose-red lips MY name  
 Floweth ; and then, as in a swoon,  
 With dinning sound my ears are rife,  
 My tremulous tongue faltereth,  
 I lose my color, I lose my breath,  
 I drink the cup of a costly death,  
 Brimmed with delirious draughts of warmest life.  
 I die with my delight, before  
 I hear what I would hear from thee ;  
 Yet tell my name again to me.  
 I *would* be dying evermore,  
 So dying ever, Eleänore.

## THE MILLER'S DAUGHTER.

I SEE the wealthy miller yet,  
 His double chin, his portly size,  
 And who that knew him could forget  
 The busy wrinkles round his eyes ?  
 The slow wise smile that, round about  
 His dusty forehead dryly curled,  
 Seemed half-within and half-without,  
 And full of dealings with the world ?

In yonder chair I see him sit,  
 Three fingers round the old silver cup—  
 I see his gray eyes twinkle yet  
 At his own jest—gray eyes lit up  
 With summer lightnings of a soul  
 So full of summer warmth, so glad,  
 So healthy, sound, and clear and whole,  
 His memory scarce can make me sad.

Yet fill my glass : give me one kiss :  
 My own sweet Alice, we must die.

There's somewhat in this world amiss  
Shall be unriddled by and by.  
There's somewhat flows to us in life,  
But more is taken quite away.  
Pray, Alice, pray, my darling wife,  
That we may die the selfsame day.

Have I not found a happy earth?  
I least should breathe a thought of pain.  
Would God renew me from my birth  
I'd almost live my life again.  
So sweet it seems with thee to walk,  
And once again to woo thee mine—  
It seems in after-dinner talk  
Across the walnuts and the wine—

To be the long and listless boy  
Late left an orphan of the squire,  
Where this old mansion mounted high  
Looks down upon the village spire:  
For even here, where I and you  
Have lived and loved alone so long,  
Each morn my sleep was broken through  
By some wild skylark's matin song.

And oft I heard the tender dove  
In firry woodlands making moan;  
But ere I saw your eyes, my love,  
I had no motion of my own.  
For scarce my life with fancy played  
Before I dreamed that pleasant dream—  
Still hither thither idly swayed  
Like those long mosses in the stream.

Or from the bridge I leaned to hear  
The mill-dam rushing down with noise,  
And see the minnows everywhere  
In crystal eddies glance and poise,  
The tall flag-flowers, when they sprung



Below the range of stepping stones,  
And those three chestnuts near, that hung  
In masses thick with milky cones.

But, Alice, what an hour was that,  
When, after roving in the woods,  
(’Twas April then,) I came and sat  
Below the chestnuts, when their buds  
Were glistening to the breezy blue ;  
And on the slope, an absent fool,  
I cast me down, nor thought of you,  
But angled in the higher pool.

A love-song I had somewhere read,  
An echo from a measured strain,  
Beat time to nothing in my head  
From some odd corner of the brain.  
It haunted me, the morning long,  
With weary sameness in the rhymes,  
The phantom of a silent song,  
That went and came a thousand times.

Then leapt a trout. In lazy mood  
I watched the little circles die ;  
They past into the level flood,  
And there a vision caught my eye ;  
The reflex of a beauteous form,  
A glowing arm, a gleaming neck,  
As when a sunbeam wavers warm  
Within the dark and dimpled beck.

For you remember, you had set,  
That morning, on the casement’s edge  
A long green box of mignonette,  
And you were leaning from the ledge :  
And when I raised my eyes, above  
They met with two so full and bright—  
Such eyes ! I swear to you, my love,  
That these have never lost their light.

I loved, and love dispelled the fear  
That I should die an early death :  
For love possessed the atmosphere,  
And filled the breast with purer breath.  
My mother thought, What ails the boy ?  
For I was altered, and began  
To move about the house with joy,  
And with the certain step of man.

I loved the brimming wave that swam  
Through quiet meadows round the mill,  
The sleepy pool above the dam,  
The pool beneath it never still,  
The meal-sacks on the whitened floor,  
The dark round of the dripping wheel,  
The very air about the door  
Made misty with the floating meal.

And oft in ramblings on the wold,  
When April nights began to blow,  
And April's crescent glimmered cold,  
I saw the village lights below ;  
I knew your taper far away,  
And full at heart of trembling hope,  
From off the wold I came, and lay  
Upon the freshly-flowered slope.

The deep brook groaned beneath the mill ;  
And "by that lamp," I thought, "she sits !"  
The white chalk-quarry from the hill  
Gleamed to the flying moon by fits.  
"O that I were beside her now !  
O will she answer if I call ?  
O would she give me vow for vow,  
Sweet Alice, if I told her all ?"

Sometimes I saw you sit and spin ;  
And, in the pauses of the wind,  
Sometimes I heard you sing within ;

Sometimes your shadow crossed the blind ;  
At last you rose and moved the light,  
And the long shadow of the chair  
Flitted across into the night,  
And all the casement darkened there.

But when at last I dared to speak,  
The lanes, you know, were white with May,  
Your ripe lips moved not, but your cheek  
Flushed like the coming of the day ;  
And so it was—half-sly, half-shy,  
You would, and would not, little one !  
Although I pleaded tenderly,  
And you and I were all alone.

And slowly was my mother brought  
To yield consent to my desire :  
She wished me happy, but she thought  
I might have looked a little higher ;  
And I was young—too young to wed :  
“ Yet must I love her for your sake ;  
Go fetch your Alice here,” she said :  
Her eyelid quivered as she spake.

And down I went to fetch my bride :  
But, Alice, you were ill at ease ;  
This dress and that by turns you tried,  
Too fearful that you should not please.  
I loved you better for your fears,  
I knew you could not look but well ;  
And dews, that would have fall’n in tears.  
I kissed away before they fell.

I watched the little flutterings,  
The doubt my mother would not see ;  
She spoke at large of many things,  
And at the last she spoke of me ;  
And turning looked upon your face,  
As near this door you sat apart,

And rose, and, with a silent grace  
Approaching, pressed you heart to heart.

Ah, well—but sing the foolish song  
I gave you, Alice, on the day  
When, arm in arm, we went along,  
A pensive pair, and you were gay  
With bridal flowers—that I may seem,  
As in the nights of old, to lie  
Beside the mill-wheel in the stream,  
While those full chestnuts whisper by.

---

It is the miller's daughter,  
And she is grown so dear, so dear,  
That I would be the jewel  
That trembles at her ear:  
For, hid in ringlets day and night,  
I'd touch her neck so warm and white.

And I would be the girdle  
About her dainty, dainty waist,  
And her heart would beat against me  
In sorrow and in rest:  
And I should know if it beat right,  
I'd clasp it round so close and tight.

And I would be the necklace,  
And all day long to fall and rise  
Upon her balmy bosom,  
With her laughter or her sighs,  
And I would lie so light, so light,  
I scarce should be unclashed at night.

---

A trifle, sweet! which true love spells—  
True love interprets—right alone.  
His light upon the letter dwells,  
For all the spirit is his own.  
So, if I waste words now, in truth  
You must blame Love. His early rage

Had force to make me rhyme in youth,  
And makes me talk too much in age.

And now those vivid hours are gone,  
Like mine own life to me thou art,  
Where Past and Present, wound in one,  
Do make a garland for the heart :  
So sing that other song I made,  
Half-angered with my happy lot,  
The day, when in the chestnut shade  
I found the blue Forget-me-not.

---

Love that hath us in the net,  
Can he pass, and we forget ?  
Many suns arise and set.  
Many a chance the years beget.  
Love the gift is Love the debt.  
Even so.

Love is hurt with jar and fret.  
Love is made a vague regret.  
Eyes with idle tears are wet.  
Idle habit links us yet.  
What is love ? for we forget :  
Ah, no ! no !

---

Look through mine eyes with thine. True wife,  
Round my true heart thine arms entwine ;  
My other dearer life in life,  
Look through my very soul with thine !  
Untouched with any shade of years,  
May those kind eyes forever dwell !  
They have not shed a many tears,  
Dear eyes, since first I knew them well.

Yet tears they shed : they had their part  
Of sorrow : for when time was ripe,  
The still affection of the heart

Became an outward breathing type,  
That into stillness past again,  
And left a want unknown before ;  
Although the loss that brought us pain,  
That loss but made us love the more,

With farther lookings on. The kiss,  
The woven arms, seem but to be  
Weak symbols of the settled bliss,  
The comfort, I have found in thee :  
But that God bless thee, dear—who wrought  
Two spirits to one equal mind—  
With blessings beyond hope or thought,  
With blessings which no words can find.

Arise, and let us wander forth  
To yon old mill across the wolds ;  
For look, the sunset, south and north,  
Winds all the vale in rosy folds,  
And fires your narrow casement glass,  
Touching the sullen pool below :  
On the chalk-hill the bearded grass  
Is dry and dewless. Let us go.

## F A T I M A .

## I.

O LOVE, Love, Love ! O withering might !  
O sun, that from thy noonday height  
Shudderest when I strain my sight,  
Throbbing through all thy heat and light,  
Lo, falling from my constant mind,  
Lo, parched and withered, deaf and blind  
I whirl like leaves in roaring wind.

## II.

Last night I wasted hateful hours  
Below the city's eastern towers :

I thirsted for the brooks, the showers :  
I rolled among the tender flowers :  
    I crushed them on my breast, my mouth :  
    I looked athwart the burning drouth  
    Of that long desert to the south.

## III.

Last night, when some one spoke his name,  
From my swift blood that went and came  
A thousand little shafts of flame  
Were shivered in my narrow frame.  
    O Love, O fire ! once he drew  
    With one long kiss my whole soul through  
    My lips, as sunlight drinketh dew.

## IV.

Before he mounts the hill, I know  
He cometh quickly : from below  
Sweet gales, as from deep gardens, blow  
Before him, striking on my brow.  
    In my dry brain my spirit soon,  
    Down-deepening from swoon to swoon,  
    Faints like a dazzled morning moon.

## V.

The wind sounds like a silver wire,  
And from beyond the noon a fire  
Is poured upon the hills, and nigher  
The skies stoop down in their desire ;  
    And, isled in sudden seas of light,  
    My heart, pierced through with fierce delight,  
    Bursts into blossom in his sight.

## VI.

My whole soul waiting silently,  
All naked in a sultry sky,  
Droops blinded with his shining eye :  
I *will* possess him or will die.  
    I will grow round him in his place,

Grow, live, die looking on his face,  
Die, dying clasped in his embrace.

ÆNONE.

THERE lies a vale in Ida, lovelier  
Than all the valleys of Ionian hills.  
The swimming vapor slopes athwart the glen,  
Puts forth an arm, and creeps from pine to pine,  
And loiters, slowly drawn. On either hand  
The lawns and meadow ledges midway down  
Hang rich in flowers, and far below them roars  
The long brook falling through the cloven ravine  
In cataract after cataract to the sea.  
Behind the valley topmost Gargarus  
Stands up and takes the morning; but in front  
The gorges, opening wide apart, reveal  
Troas and Ilion's columned citadel,  
The crown of Troas.

Hither came at noon  
Mournful Ænone, wandering forlorn  
Of Paris, once her playmate on the hills.  
Her cheek had lost the rose, and round her neck  
Floated her hair or seemed to float in rest.  
She, leaning on a fragment twined with vine,  
Sang to the stillness, till the mountain-shade  
Sloped downward to her seat from the upper cliff.

“O mother Ida; many-fountained Ida,  
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
For now the noonday quiet holds the hill:  
The grasshopper is silent in the grass:  
The lizard, with his shadow on the stone,  
Rests like a shadow, and the cicala sleeps.  
The purple flowers droop: the golden bee  
Is lily-cradled: I alone awake.



My eyes are full of tears, my heart of love,  
My heart is breaking, and my eyes are dim,  
And I am all aweary of my life.

“ O mother Ida, many-fountained Ida,  
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
Hear me O Earth, hear me O Hills, O Caves,  
That house the cold crowned snake! O mountain  
                    brooks,  
I am the daughter of a River-God;  
Hear me, for I will speak, and build up all  
My sorrow with my song, as yonder walls  
Rose slowly to a music slowly breathed,  
A cloud that gathered shape: for it may be  
That, while I speak of it, a little while  
My heart may wander from its deeper woe.

“ O mother Ida, many-fountained Ida,  
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
I waited underneath the dawning hills,  
Aloft the mountain lawn was dewy-dark,  
And dewy-dark aloft the mountain-pine:  
Beautiful Paris, evil-hearted Paris,  
Leading a jet-black goat white-horned, white-hooved,  
Came up from reedy Simois all alone.

“ O mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
Far-off the torrent called me from the cleft:  
Far up the solitary morning snote  
The streaks of virgin snow. With down-dropt eyes,  
I sat alone: white breasted like a star  
Fronting the dawn he moved; a leopard skin  
Drooped from his shoulder, but his sunny hair  
Clustered about his temples like a God's;  
And his cheek brightened as the foam-bow brightens  
When the wind blows the foam, and all my heart  
Went forth to embrace him coming ere he came.

“ Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
He smiled, and opening out his milk-white palm

Disclosed a fruit of pure Hesperian gold,  
That smelt ambrosially, and while I looked  
And listened, the full-flowing river of speech  
Came down upon my heart.

“ ‘ My own Ænone,  
Beautiful-browed Ænone, my own soul,  
Behold this fruit, whose gleaming rind engraven  
“ For the most fair,” would seem to award it thine,  
As lovelier than whatever Oread haunt  
The knolls of Ida, loveliest in all grace  
Of movement, and the charm of married brows.’

“ Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
He prest the blossom of his lips to mine,  
And added, ‘ This was cast upon the board,  
When all the full-faced presence of the Gods  
Ranged in the halls of Peleus ; whereupon  
Rose feud, with question unto whom ’twere due :  
But light-foot Iris brought it yester-eve,  
Delivering that to me, by common voice  
Elected umpire, Herè comes to-day  
Pallas and Aphrodite, claiming each  
This meed of fairest. Thou, within the cave  
Behind yon whispering tuft of oldest pine,  
Mayst well behold them unbeheld, unheard  
Hear all, and see thy Paris judge of Gods.’

“ Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
It was the deep midnight : one silvery cloud  
Had lost his way between the piney sides  
Of this long glen. Then to the bower they came.  
Naked they came to that smooth-swarded bower,  
And at their feet the crocus brake like fire,  
Violet, amaracus, and asphodel,  
Lotos and lilies : and a wind arose,  
And overhead the wandering ivy and vine,  
‘ This way and that, in many a wild festoon

Ran riot, garlanding the gnarled boughs  
With bunch and berry and flower through and  
through.

“ O mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
On the tree-tops a crested peacock lit,  
And o’er him flowed a golden cloud, and leaned  
Upon him, slowly dropping fragrant dew.  
Then first I heard the voice of her, to whom  
Coming through Heaven, like a light that grows  
Larger and clearer, with one mind the Gods  
Rise up for reverence. She to Paris made  
Proffer of royal power, ample rule  
Unquestioned, overflowing revenue  
Wherewith to embellish state, ‘ from many a vale  
And river-sundered champaign clothed with corn,  
Or labored mines, undrainable of ore.  
Honor,’ she said, ‘ and homage, tax and toll,  
From many an inland town and haven large,  
Mast-thronged beneath her shadowing citadel  
In glassy bays among her tallest towers.’

“ O mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
Still she spake on, and still she spake of power,  
‘ Which in all action is the end of all ;  
Power fitted to the season ; wisdom-bred  
And throned of wisdom—from all neighbor crowns  
Alliance and allegiance, till thy hand  
Fail from the sceptre-staff. Such boon from me,  
From me, Heaven’s Queen, Paris, to thee king-born,  
A shepherd all thy life, but yet king-born,  
Should come most welcome, seeing men, in power  
Only, are likest Gods, who have attained  
Rest in a happy place and quiet seats  
Above the thunder, with undying bliss,  
In knowledge of their own supremacy.’

“ Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
She ceased, and Paris held the costly fruit

Out at arm's-length, so much the thought of power  
 Flattered his spirit ; but Pallas where she stood  
 Somewhat apart, her clear and bared limbs  
 O'erthwarted with the brazen-headed spear  
 Upon her pearly shoulder leaning cold,  
 The while, above, her full and earnest eye  
 Over her snow-cold breast and angry cheek  
 Kept watch, waiting decision, made reply.

“ Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control,  
 These three alone lead life to sovereign power.  
 Yet not for power, (power of herself  
 Would come uncalled for,) but to live by law,  
 Acting the law we live by without fear ;  
 And because right is right, to follow right  
 Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence.’

“ Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 Again she said : ‘ I woo thee not with gifts.  
 Sequel of guerdon could not alter me  
 To fairer. Judge thou me by what I am,  
 So shalt thou find me fairest.

Yet, indeed,  
 If gazing on divinity disrobed,  
 Thy mortal eyes are frail to judge of fair,  
 Unbiased by self-profit, oh ! rest thee sure  
 That I shall love thee well and cleave to thee,  
 So that my vigor, wedded to thy blood,  
 Shall strike within thy pulses, like a God's,  
 To push thee forward through a life of shocks,  
 Dangers and deeds, until endurance grow  
 Sinewed with action, and the full-grown will,  
 Circled through all experiences, pure law,  
 Commensure perfect freedom.’

“ Here she ceased,  
 And Paris pondered, and I cried, ‘ O Paris,  
 Give it to Pallas !’ but he heard me not,  
 Or hearing would not hear me, woe is me !

“ O mother Ida, many-fountained Ida,  
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
Idalian Aphrodite beautiful,  
Fresh as the foam, new-bathed in Paphian wells,  
With rosy slender fingers backward drew  
From her warm brows and bosom her deep hair  
Ambrosial, golden round her lucid throat  
And shoulder: from the violets her light foot  
Shone rosy-white, and o'er her rounded form  
Between the shadows of the vine bunches  
Floated the glowing sunlights, as she moved.

“ Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
She with a subtle smile in her mild eyes,  
The herald of her triumph, drawing nigh,  
Half-whispered in his ear, ‘ I promise thee  
The fairest and most loving wife in Greece.’  
She spoke and laughed: I shut my sight for fear:  
But when I looked, Paris had raised his arm,  
And I beheld great Herè's angry eyes,  
As she withdrew into the golden cloud,  
And I was left alone within the bower;  
And from that time to this I am alone,  
And I shall be alone until I die.

“ Yet, mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
Fairest—why fairest wife? am I not fair?  
My love hath told me so a thousand times.  
Methinks I must be fair, for yesterday,  
When I past by, a wild and wanton pard,  
Eyed like the evening star, with playful tail,  
Crouched fawning in the weed. Most loving is she?  
Ah me, my mountain shepherd, that my arms  
Were wound about thee, and my hot lips prest  
Close, close to thine in that quick-falling dew  
Of fruitful kisses, thick as Autumn rains  
Flash in the pools of whirling Simois.

“ O mother, hear me yet before I die.  
They came, they cut away my tallest pines.

My dark tall pines, that plumed the craggy ledge  
 High over the blue gorge, and all between  
 The snowy peak and snow-white cataract  
 Fostered the callow eaglet—from beneath  
 Whose thick mysterious boughs in the dark morn  
 The panther's roar came muffled, while I sat  
 Low in the valley. Never, never more  
 Shall lone Œnone see the morning mist  
 Sweep through them ; never see them overlaid  
 With narrow moonlit slips of silver cloud,  
 Between the loud stream and the trembling stars.

“ O mother, hear me yet before I die.  
 I wish that somewhere in the ruined folds,  
 Among the fragments tumbled from the glens,  
 Or the dry thickets, I could meet with her,  
 The Abominable, that uninvited came  
 Into the fair Peleïan banquet-hall,  
 And cast the golden fruit upon the board,  
 And bred this change ; that I might speak my  
                     mind,  
 And tell her to her face how much I hate  
 Her presence, hated both of Gods and men.

“ O mother, hear me yet before I die.  
 Hath he not sworn his love a thousand times,  
 In this green valley, under this green hill,  
 Even on this hand, and sitting on this stone ?  
 Sealed it with kisses ? watered it with tears ?  
 O happy tears, and how unlike to these !  
 O happy Heaven ! how canst thou see my face ?  
 O happy earth, how canst thou bear my weight ?  
 O death, death, death, thou ever-floating cloud,  
 There are enough unhappy on this earth ;  
 Pass by the happy souls, that love to live :  
 I pray thee pass before my light of life,  
 And shadow all my soul, that I may die.  
 Thou weighest heavy on the heart within,  
 Weigh heavy on my eyelids : let me die.

“ O mother, hear me yet before I die.  
I will not die alone, for fiery thoughts  
Do shape themselves within me more and more.  
Whereof I catch the issue, as I hear  
Dead sounds at night come from the inmost hills,  
Like footsteps upon wool. I dimly see  
My far-off doubtful purpose, as a mother  
Conjectures of the features of her child  
Ere it is born : her child !—a shudder comes  
Across me : never child be born of me,  
Unblest, to vex me with his father’s eyes !

“ O mother, hear me yet before I die.  
Hear me, O earth. I will not die alone,  
Lest their shrill happy laughter come to me  
Walking the cold and starless road of Death  
Uncomforted, leaving my ancient love  
With the Greek woman. I will rise and go  
Down into Troy, and ere the stars come forth  
Talk with the wild Cassandra, for she says  
A fire dances before her, and a sound  
Rings ever in her ears of armed men.  
What this may be I know not, but I know  
That, wheresoe’er I am by night and day,  
All earth and air seem only burning fire.”

## THE SISTERS.

### I.

WE were two daughters of one race :  
She was the fairest in the face :  
The wind is blowing in turret and tree.  
They were together, and she fell ;  
Therefore revenge became me well.  
O the Earl was fair to see !

## II.

She died : she went to burning flame :  
She mixed her ancient blood with shame.  
The wind is howling in turret and tree.  
Whole weeks and months, and early and late,  
To win his love I lay in wait.  
O the Earl was fair to see !

## III.

I made a feast ; I bade him come :  
I won his love, I brought him home.  
The wind is roaring in turret and tree.  
And after supper, on a bed,  
Upon my lap he laid his head :  
O the Earl was fair to see !

## IV.

I kissed his eyelids into rest :  
His ruddy cheek upon my breast.  
The wind is raging in turret and tree.  
I hated him with the hate of hell,  
But I loved his beauty passing well.  
O the Earl was fair to see !

## V.

I rose up in the silent night :  
I made my dagger sharp and bright.  
The wind is raving in turret and tree.  
As half-asleep his breath he drew,  
Three times I stabbed him through and through.  
O the Earl was fair to see !

## VI.

I curled and combed his comely head,  
He looked so grand when he was dead.  
The wind is blowing in turret and tree.  
I wrapt his body in the sheet,  
And laid him at his mother's feet.  
O the Earl was fair to see !



## T O ———

WITH THE FOLLOWING POEM.

I SEND you here a sort of allegory,  
(For you will understand it,) of a soul,  
A sinful soul possessed of many gifts,  
A spacious garden full of flowering weeds,  
A glorious Devil, large in heart and brain,  
That did love Beauty only, (Beauty seen  
In all varieties of mould and mind,)  
And Knowledge for its beauty ; or if Good,  
Good only for its beauty, seeing not  
That Beauty, Good, and Knowledge, are three sisters  
That dote upon each other, friends to man,  
Living together under the same roof,  
And never can be sundered without tears.  
And he that shuts Love out, in turn shall be  
Shut out from Love, and on her threshold lie  
Howling in outer darkness. Not for this  
Was common clay ta'en from the common earth,  
Moulded by God, and tempered with the tears  
Of angels to the perfect shape of man.

## THE PALACE OF ART.

I BUILT my soul a lordly pleasure-house,  
Wherein at ease for aye to dwell.  
I said, "O Soul, make merry and carouse,  
Dear soul, for all is well."  
  
A huge crag-platform, smooth as burnished brass,  
I chose. The ranged ramparts bright  
From level meadow-bases of deep grass  
Suddenly scaled the light.

Thereon I built it firm. Of ledge or shelf  
 The rock rose clear, or winding stair.  
 My soul would live alone unto herself  
 In her high palace there.

And "while the world runs round and round," I said,  
 "Reign thou apart, a quiet king,  
 Still as, while Saturn whirls, his steadfast shade  
 Sleeps on his luminous ring."

To which my soul made answer readily :  
 "Trust me, in bliss I shall abide  
 In this great mansion, that is built for me,  
 So royal-rich and wide."

\* \* \* \*  
 \* \* \* \*

Four courts I made, East, West, and South and  
 North,  
 In each a squared lawn, wherefrom  
 The golden gorge of dragons spouted forth  
 A flood of fountain-foam.

And round the cool green courts there ran a row  
 Of cloisters, branched like mighty woods,  
 Echoing all night to that sonorous flow  
 Of spouted fountain-floods.

And round the roofs a gilded gallery  
 That lent broad verge to distant lands,  
 Far as the wild swan wings, to where the sky  
 Dipt down to sea and sands.

From those four jets four currents in one swell  
 Across the mountain streamed below  
 In misty folds, that floating as they fell  
 Lit up a torrent-blow.

And high on every peak a statue seemed  
 To hang on tiptoe, tossing up

A cloud of incense of all odor steamed  
From out a golden cup.

So that she thought, " And who shall gaze upon  
My palace with unblinded eyes,  
While this great bow will waver in the sun,  
And that sweet incense rise ? "

For that sweet incense rose and never failed,  
And, while day sank or mounted higher,  
The light ærial gallery, golden-railed,  
Burnt like a fringe of fire.

Likewise the deep-set windows, stained and traced,  
Would seem slow-flaming crimson fires  
From shadowed grotts of arches interlaced,  
And tipt with frost-like spires.

\* \* \* \* \*  
\* \* \* \* \*

Full of long-sounding corridors it was,  
That over-vaulted grateful gloom,  
Through which the livelong day my soul did pass,  
Well-pleased, from room to room.

Full of great rooms and small the palace stood,  
All various, each a perfect whole  
From living Nature, fit for every mood  
And change of my still soul.

For some were hung with arras green and blue,  
Showing a gaudy summer-morn,  
Where with puffed cheek the belted hunter blew  
His wreathed bugle-horn.

One seemed all dark and red—a tract of sand,  
And some one pacing there alone,  
Who paced forever in a glimmering land,  
Lit with a low large moon.

One showed an iron coast and angry waves.  
 You seemed to hear them climb and fall  
 And roar rock-thwarted under bellowing caves,  
 Beneath the windy wall.

And one, a full-fed river winding slow  
 By herds upon an endless plain,  
 The ragged rims of thunder brooding low,  
 With shadow-streaks of rain.

And one, the reapers at their sultry toil.  
 In front they bound the sheaves. Behind  
 Were realms of upland, prodigal in oil,  
 And hoary to the wind.

And one, a foreground black with stones and slags,  
 Beyond a line of heights, and higher  
 All barred with long white cloud the scornful crags,  
 And highest, snow and fire.

And one, an English home—gray twilight poured  
 On dewy pastures, dewy trees,  
 Softer than sleep—all things in order stored,  
 A haunt of ancient Peace.

Nor these alone, but every landscape fair,  
 As fit for every mood of mind,  
 Or gay, or grave, or sweet, or stern, was there,  
 Not less than truth designed.

\* \* \* \*  
 \* \* \* \*

Or the maid-mother by a crucifix,  
 In tracts of pasture sunny-warm,  
 Beneath branch-work of costly sardonyx  
 Sat smiling, babe in arm.

Or in a clear-walled city on the sea,  
 Near gilded organ-pipes, her hair  
 Wound with white roses, slept St. Cecily;  
 An angel looked at her.

Or thronging all one porch of Paradise,  
 A group of Houris bowed to see  
 The dying Islamite, with hands and eyes  
 That said, we wait for thee.

Or mythic Uther's deeply-wounded son  
 In some fair space of sloping greens  
 Lay, dozing in the vale of Avalon,  
 And watched by weeping queens.

Or hollowing one hand against his ear,  
 To list a footfall, ere he saw  
 The wood-nymph, stayed the Ausonian king to hear  
 Of wisdom and of law.

Or over hills with peaky tops engrailed,  
 And many a tract of palm and rice,  
 The throne of Indian Cama slowly sailed  
 A summer fanned with spice.

Or sweet Europa's mantle blew unclasped  
 From off her shoulder backward borne :  
 From one hand drooped a crocus : one hand grasped  
 The mild bull's golden horn.

Or else flushed Ganymede, his rosy thigh  
 Half-buried in the Eagle's down,  
 Sole as a flying star shot through the sky  
 Above the pillared town.

Nor these alone : but every legend fair  
 Which the supreme Caucasian mind  
 Carved out of Nature for itself, was there,  
 Not less than life, designed.

\* \* \* \*  
 \* \* \* \*

Then in the towers I placed great bells that swung  
 Moved of themselves, with silver sound ;  
 And with choice paintings of wise men I hung  
 The royal dais round.

For there was Milton like a seraph strong,  
Beside him Shakspeare bland and mild ;  
And there the world-worn Dante grasped his song,  
And somewhat grimly smiled.

And there the Iorian father of the rest ;  
A million wrinkles carved his skin ;  
A hundred winters snowed upon his breast,  
From cheek and throat and chin.

Above, the fair hall-ceiling stately-set  
Many an arch high up did lift,  
And angels rising and descending met  
With interchange of gift.

Below was all mosaic choicely planned  
With cycles of the human tale  
Of this wide world, the times of every land  
So wrought, they will not fail.

The people here, a beast of burden slow,  
Toiled onward, pricked with goads and stings ;  
Here played, a tiger, rolling to and fro  
The heads and crowns of kings ;

Here rose, an athlete, strong to break or bind  
All force in bonds that might endure,  
And here once more like some sick man declined,  
And trusted any cure.

But over these she trod : and those great bells  
Began to chime. She took her throne :  
She sat betwixt the shining Oriels,  
To sing her songs alone.

And through the topmost Oriels' colored flame  
Two godlike faces gazed below :  
Plato the wise, and large-browed Verulam,  
The first of those who know.

And all those names, that in their motion were  
Full-welling fountain-heads of change,  
Betwixt the slender shafts were blazoned fair  
In diverse raiment strange :

Through which the lights, rose, amber, emerald, blue  
Flushed in her temples and her eyes,  
And from her lips, as morn from Memnon, drew  
Rivers of melodies.

No nightingale delighteth to prolong  
Her low preamble all alone,  
More than my soul to hear her echoed song  
Throb through the ribbed stone ;

Singing and murmuring in her feastful mirth,  
Joying to feel herself alive,  
Lord over Nature, Lord of the visible earth,  
Lord of the senses five ;

Communing with herself: " All these are mine,  
And let the world have peace or wars,  
'Tis one to me." She—when young night divine  
Crowned dying day with stars,

Making sweet close of his delicious toils—  
Lit light in wreaths and anadems,  
And pure quintessences of precious oils  
In hollowed moons of gems,

To mimic heaven ; and clapt her hands and cried,  
" I marvel if my still delight  
In this great house so royal-rich, and wide,  
Be flattered to the height.

" O all things fair to sate my various eyes !  
O shapes and hues that please me well !  
O silent faces of the Great and Wise,  
My Gods, with whom I dwell !

"O God-like isolation which art mine,  
 I can but count thee perfect gain,  
 What time I watch the darkening droves of swine  
 That range on yonder plain.

"In filthy sloughs they roll a prurient skin,  
 They graze and wallow, breed and sleep;  
 And oft some brainless devil enters in,  
 And drives them to the deep."

Then of the moral instinct would she prate,  
 And of the rising from the dead,  
 As hers by right of full-accomplished Fate;  
 And at the last she said :

"I take possession of man's mind and deed.  
 I care not what the sects may brawl.  
 I sit as God, holding no form of creed,  
 But contemplating all."

\* \* \* \*  
 \* \* \* \*

Full oft the riddle of the painful earth  
 Flashed through her as she sat alone,  
 Yet not the less held she her solemn mirth,  
 And intellectual throne.

And so she throve and prospered : so three years  
 She prospered : on the fourth she fell,  
 Like Herod, when the shout was in his ears,  
 Struck through with pangs of hell.

Lest she should fail and perish utterly,  
 God, before whom ever lie bare  
 The abysmal deeps of Personality,  
 Plagued her with sore despair.

When she would think, where'er she turned her sight,  
 The airy hand confusion wrought,  
 Wrote "Mene, mene," and divided quite  
 The kingdom of her thought.



Deep dread and loathing of her solitude  
Fell on her, from which mood was born  
Scorn of herself; again, from out that mood  
Laughter at her self-scorn.

“What! is not this my place of strength,” she said,  
“My spacious mansion built for me,  
Whereof the strong foundation-stones were laid  
Since my first memory?”

But in dark corners of her palace stood  
Uncertain shapes; and unawares  
On white-eyed phantasms weeping tears of blood,  
And horrible nightmares,

And hollow shades enclosing hearts of flame,  
And, with dim fretted foreheads all,  
On corpses three-months-old at noon she came,  
That stood against the wall.

A spot of dull stagnation, without light  
Or power of movement, seemed my soul,  
‘Mid onward-sloping motions infinite  
Making for one sure goal.

A still salt pool, locked in with bars of sand;  
Left on the shore; that hears all night  
The plunging seas draw backward from the land  
Their moon-led waters white.

A star that with the choral starry dance  
Joined not, but stood, and standing saw  
The hollow orb of moving Circumstance  
Rolled round by one fixed law.

Back on herself her serpent pride had curled.  
“No voice,” she shrieked in that lone hall,  
“No voice breaks through the stillness of this world,  
One deep, deep silence all!”

She, mouldering with the dull earth's mouldering  
sod,

Inwrought tenfold in slothful shame,  
Lay there exiled from eternal God,  
Lost to her place and name ;

And death and life she hated equally,  
And nothing saw, for her despair,  
But dreadful time, dreadful eternity,  
No comfort anywhere ;

Remaining utterly confused with fears,  
And ever worse with growing time,  
And ever unrelieved by dismal tears,  
And all alone in crime :

Shut up as in a crumbling tomb, girt round  
With blackness as a solid wall,  
Far off she seemed to hear the dully sound  
Of human footsteps fall.

As in strange lands a traveller walking slow,  
In doubt and great perplexity,  
A little before moon-rise hears the low  
Moan of an unknown sea ;

And knows not if it be thunder or a sound  
Of rocks thrown down, or one deep cry  
Of great wild beasts ; then thinketh, "I have found  
A new land, but I die."

She howled aloud, "I am on fire within.  
There comes no murmur of reply.  
What is it that will take away my sin,  
And save me lest I die ?"

So when four years were wholly finished,  
She threw her royal robes away.  
"Make me a cottage in the vale," she said.  
"Where I may mourn and pray.

" Yet pull not down my palace towers, that are  
So lightly, beautifully built :  
Perchance I may return with others there  
When I have purged my guilt."

## LADY CLARA VERE DE VERE.

LADY Clara Vere de Vere,  
Of me you shall not win renown ;  
You thought to break a country heart  
For pastime, ere you went to town.  
At me you smiled, but unbeguiled  
I saw the snare, and I retired :  
'The daughter of a hundred Earls,  
You are not one to be desired.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,  
I know you proud to bear your name ;  
Your pride is yet no mate for mine,  
Too proud to care from whence I came.  
Nor would I break for your sweet sake  
A heart that dotes on truer charms.  
A simple maiden in her flower  
Is worth a hundred coats-of-arms.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,  
Some meeker pupil you must find,  
For were you queen of all that is,  
I could not stoop to such a mind.  
You sought to prove how I could love,  
And my disdain is my reply.  
The lion on your old stone gates  
Is not more cold to you than I.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,  
You put strange memories in my head

Not thrice your branching limes have blown  
Since I beheld young Laurence dead.  
O your sweet eyes, your low replies :  
A great enchantress you may be ;  
But there was that across his throat  
Which you had hardly cared to see.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,  
When thus he met his mother's view,  
She had the passions of her kind,  
She spake some certain truths of you.  
Indeed, I heard one bitter word  
That scarce is fit for you to hear ;  
Her manners had not that repose  
Which stamps the caste of Vere de Vere.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,  
There stands a spectre in your hall :  
The guilt of blood is at your door :  
You changed a wholesome heart to gall.  
You held your course without remorse,  
To make him trust his modest worth,  
And, last, you fixed a vacant stare,  
And slew him with your noble birth.

Trust me, Clara Vere de Vere,  
From yon blue heavens above us bent  
The grand old gardener and his wife  
Smile at the claims of long descent.  
Howe'er it be, it seems to me,  
'Tis only noble to be good.  
Kind hearts are more than coronets,  
And simple faith than Norman blood.

I know you, Clara Vere de Vere :  
You pine among your halls and towers,  
The languid light of your proud eyes  
Is wearied of the rolling hours.  
In glowing health, with boundless wealth,

But sickening of a vague disease,  
You know so ill to deal with time,  
You needs must play such pranks as these.

Clara, Clara Vere de Vere,  
If Time be heavy on your hands,  
Are there no beggars at your gate,  
Nor any poor about your lands?  
O! teach the orphan-boy to read,  
Or teach the orphan-girl to sew,  
Pray Heaven for a human heart,  
And let the foolish yeoman go.

## THE MAY QUEEN.

### I.

You must wake and call me early, call me early,  
mother dear;  
To-morrow 'ill be the happiest time of all the glad  
New-year;  
Of all the glad New-year, mother, the maddest,  
merriest day;  
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to  
be Queen o' the May.

### II.

There's many a black, black eye, they say, but none  
so bright as mine;  
There's Margaret and Mary, there's Kate and Caro-  
line:  
But none so fair as little Alice in all the land, they  
say:  
So I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be  
Queen o' the May.

## III.

I sleep so sound all night, mother, that I shall never  
wake,  
If you do not call me loud when the day begins to  
break :  
But I must gather knots of flowers, and buds and  
garlands gay,  
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to  
be Queen o' the May.

## IV.

As I came up the valley, whom think ye should I see,  
But Robin leaning on the bridge beneath the hazel-  
tree ?  
He thought of that sharp look, mother, I gave him  
yesterday,—  
But I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to  
be Queen o' the May.

## V.

He thought I was a ghost, mother, for I was all in  
white,  
And I ran by him without speaking, like a flash of  
light.  
They call me cruel-hearted, but I care not what  
they say,  
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to  
be Queen o' the May.

## VI.

They say he's dying all for love, but that can never  
be :  
They say his heart is breaking, mother—what is  
that to me ?  
There's many a bolder lad 'ill woo me any summer  
day,  
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to  
be Queen o' the May.

## VII.

Little Effie shall go with me to-morrow to the green,  
And you'll be there, too, mother, to see me made  
the Queen :  
For the shepherd lads on every side 'ill come from  
far away,  
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to  
be Queen o' the May.

## VIII.

The honeysuckle round the porch has woven its  
wavy bowers,  
And by the meadow-trenches blow the faint sweet  
cuckoo-flowers ;  
And the wild marsh-marigold shines like fire in  
swamps and hollows gray,  
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to  
be Queen o' the May.

## IX.

The night-winds come and go, mother, upon the  
meadow grass,  
And the happy stars above them seem to brighten  
as they pass ;  
There will not be a drop of rain the whole of the  
livelong day,  
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to  
be Queen o' the May.

## X.

All the valley, mother, 'ill be fresh and green and  
still,  
And the cowslip and the crowfoot are over all the  
hill,  
And the rivulet in the flowery dale 'ill merrily  
glance and play,  
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to  
be Queen o' the May.

## XI.

So you must wake and call me early, call me early,  
    mother dear,  
To-morrow 'ill be the happiest time of all the glad  
    New-year:  
To-morrow 'ill be of all the year the maddest, mer-  
    riest day,  
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to  
    be Queen o' the May.

## NEW YEAR'S EVE.

## I.

If you're waking call me early, call me early,  
    mother dear,  
For I would see the sun rise upon the glad New-  
    year.  
It is the last New-year that I shall ever see,  
Then you may lay me low i' the mould, and think  
    no more of me.

## II.

To-night I saw the sun set: he set and left behind  
The good old year, the dear old time, and all my  
    peace of mind;  
And the New-year's coming up, mother, but I shall  
    never see  
The blossom on the blackthorn, the leaf upon the  
    tree.

## III.

Last May we made a crown of flowers: we had a  
    merry day;  
Beneath the hawthorn on the green they made me  
    Queen of May;



And we danced about the May-pole and in the  
hazel copse,  
Till Charles's Wain came out above the tall white  
chimney-tops.

## IV.

There's not a flower on all the hills: the frost is on  
the pane:  
I only wish to live till the snowdrops come again:  
I wish the snow would melt and the sun come out  
on high:  
I long to see a flower so before the day I die.

## V.

The building rook 'ill caw from the windy tall elm-  
tree,  
And the tufted plover pipe along the fallow lea,  
And the swallow 'ill come back again with summer  
o'er the wave,  
But I shall lie alone, mother, within the moulder-  
ing grave.

## VI.

Upon the chancel-casement, and upon that grave  
of mine,  
In the early early morning the summer sun 'ill  
shine,  
Before the red cock crows from the farm upon the  
hill,  
When you are warm-asleep, mother, and all the  
world is still.

## VII.

When the flowers come again, mother, beneath the  
waning light  
You'll never see me more in the long gray fields at  
night;  
When from the dry dark wold the summer airs blow  
cool  
On the oat-grass and the sword-grass, and the bul-  
rush in the pool.

## VIII.

You'll bury me, my mother, just beneath the haw-  
thorn shade,  
And you'll come sometimes and see me where I am  
lowly laid.  
I shall not forget you, mother, I shall hear you when  
you pass,  
With your feet above my head in the long and  
pleasant grass.

## IX.

I have been wild and wayward, but you'll forgive  
me now ;  
You'll kiss me, my own mother, and forgive me ere  
I go :  
Nay, nay, you must not weep, nor let your grief be  
wild,  
You should not fret for me, mother, you have  
another child.

## X.

If I can I'll come again, mother, from out my resting-  
place ;  
Though you'll not see me, mother, I shall look upon  
your face ;  
Though I cannot speak a word, I shall harken what  
you say,  
And be often, often with you when you think I'm  
far away.

## XI.

Good-night, good-night, when I have said good-night  
forevermore,  
And you see me carried out from the threshold of  
the door ;  
Don't let Effie come to see me till my grave be  
growing green :  
She'll be a better child to you than ever I have  
been.

## XII.

She'll find my garden-tools upon the granary floor :  
Let her take 'em : they are hers : I shall never  
garden more :  
But tell her, when I'm gone, to train the rose-bush  
that I set  
About the parlor-window and the box of migno-  
nette.

## XIII.

Good-night, sweet mother : call me before the day  
is born.  
All night I lie awake, but I fall asleep at morn ;  
But I would see the sun rise upon the glad New-  
year,  
So, if you're waking, call me, call me early, mother  
dear.

## CONCLUSION.

## I.

I THOUGHT to pass away before, and yet alive I  
am ;  
And in the fields all round I hear the bleating of  
the lamb.  
How sadly, I remember, rose the morning of the  
year !  
To die before the snowdrop came, and now the  
violet's here.

## II.

O sweet is the new violet, that comes beneath the  
skies,  
And sweeter is the young lamb's voice to me that  
cannot rise,

And sweet is all the land about, and all the flowers  
that blow,  
And sweeter far is death than life to me that long  
to go.

## III.

It seemed so hard at first, mother, to leave the  
blessed sun,  
And now it seems as hard to stay; and yet, His will  
be done!  
But still I think it can't be long before I find re-  
lease;  
And that good man, the clergyman, has told me  
words of peace.

## IV.

O blessings on his kindly voice and on his silver  
hair!  
And blessings on his whole life long, until he meet  
me there!  
O blessings on his kindly heart and on his silver  
head!  
A thousand times I blest him, as he knelt beside my  
bed.

## V.

He taught me all the mercy, for he showed me all  
the sin.  
Now, though my lamp was lighted late, there's One  
will let me in:  
Nor would I now be well, mother, again, if that  
could be,  
For my desire is but to pass to Him that died for  
me.

## VI.

I did not hear the dog howl, mother, or the death-  
watch beat,  
There came a sweeter token when the night and  
morning meet:

But sit beside my bed, mother, and put your hand  
in mine,  
And Effie on the other side, and I will tell the sign.

## VII.

All in the wild March-morning I heard the angels  
call;  
It was when the moon was setting, and the dark  
was over all;  
The trees began to whisper, and the wind began to  
roll,  
And in the wild March-morning I heard them call  
my soul.

## VIII.

For lying broad awake I thought of you and Effie  
dear;  
I saw you sitting in the house, and I no longer  
here;  
With all my strength I prayed for both, and so I  
felt resigned,  
And up the valley came a swell of music on the  
wind.

## IX.

I thought that it was fancy, and I listened in my  
bed,  
And then did something speak to me—I know not  
what was said;  
For great delight and shuddering took hold of all  
my mind,  
And up the valley came again the music on the  
wind.

## X.

But you were sleeping; and I said, "It's not for  
them; it's mine."  
And if it comes three times, I thought, I take it for  
a sign.

And once again it came, and close beside th  
window-bars,  
Then seemed to go right up to heaven and die  
among the stars.

## XI.

So now I think my time is near. I trust it is. I  
know  
The blessed music went that way my soul will have  
to go.  
And for myself, indeed, I care not if I go to-day,  
But, Effie, you must comfort *her* when I am past  
away.

## XII.

And say to Robin a kind word, and tell him not to  
fret;  
There's many worthier than I would make him  
happy yet.  
If I had lived—I cannot tell—I might have been  
his wife;  
But all these things have ceased to be, with my  
desire of life.

## XIII.

O look! the sun begins to rise, the heavens are in  
a glow;  
He shines upon a hundred fields, and all of them I  
know.  
And there I move no longer now, and there his  
light may shine—  
Wild flowers in the valley for other hands than  
mine.

## XIV.

O sweet and strange it seems to me, that ere this  
day is done  
The voice that now is speaking may be beyond the  
sun—

Forever and forever with those just souls and true—  
And what is life, that we should moan ? why make  
we such ado ?

## XV.

Forever and forever, all in a blessed home—  
And there to wait a little while till you and Effie  
come—  
To lie within the light of God, as I lie upon your  
breast—  
And the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary  
are at rest.

## THE LOTOS-EATERS.

## I.

“COURAGE !” he said, and pointed toward the  
land ;  
“ This mounting wave will roll us shoreward soon.”  
In the afternoon they came unto a land,  
In which it seemed always afternoon.  
All round the coast the languid air did swoon,  
Breathing like one that hath a weary dream.  
Full-faced above the valley stood the moon ;  
And like a downward smoke, the slender stream  
Along the cliff to fall and pause and fall did seem.

## II.

A land of streams ! some, like a downward smoke,  
Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn, did go ;  
And some through wavering lights and shadows  
broke  
Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam below.  
They saw the gleaming river seaward flow  
From the inner land : far-off, three mountain-tops,  
Three silent pinnacles of aged snow,

Stood sunset-flushed : and, dewed with showery  
drops,  
Up-clomb the shadowy pine above the woven copse.

## III.

The charmed sunset lingered low adown  
In the red West : through mountain clefts the dale  
Was seen far inland, and the yellow down  
Bordered with palm, and many a winding vale  
And meadow, set with slender galingale ;  
A land where all things always seemed the same !  
And round about the keel with faces pale,  
Dark faces pale against that rosy flame,  
The mild-eyed melancholy Lotos-eaters came.

## IV.

Branches they bore of that enchanted stem,  
Laden with flower and fruit, whereof they gave  
To each, but whoso did receive of them,  
And taste, to him the gushing of the wave  
Far, far away did seem to mourn and rave  
On alien shores ; and if his fellow spake,  
His voice was thin, as voices from the grave ;  
And deep-asleep he seemed, yet all awake,  
And music in his ears his beating heart did make.

## V.

They sat them down upon the yellow sand,  
Between the sun and moon upon the shore ;  
And sweet it was to dream of Father-land,  
Of child, and wife, and slave ; but evermore  
Most weary seemed the sea, weary the oar,  
Weary the wandering fields of barren foam.  
Then some one said, " We will return no more ;"  
And all at once they sang, " Our island home  
Is far beyond the wave ; we will no longer roam."



## CHORIC SONG.

## 1.

There is sweet music here that softer falls  
Than petals from blown roses on the grass,  
Or night-dews on still waters between walls  
Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass ;  
Music that gentlier on the spirit lies  
Than tired eyelids upon tired eyes ;  
Music that brings sweet sleep down from the bliss-  
ful skies.

Here are cool mosses deep,  
And through the moss the ivies creep,  
And in the stream the long-leaved flowers weep,  
And from the craggy ledge the poppy hangs in  
sleep.

## 2.

Why are we weighed upon with heaviness,  
And utterly consumed with sharp distress,  
While all things else have rest from weariness ?  
All things have rest : why should we toil alone,  
We only toil, who are the first of things,  
And make perpetual moan,  
Still from one sorrow to another thrown :  
Nor ever fold our wings,  
And cease from wanderings,  
Nor steep our brows in slumber's holy balm ;  
Nor hearken what the inner spirit sings,  
" There is no joy but calm ! "  
Why should we only toil, the roof and crown of  
things ?

## 3.

Lo ! in the middle of the wood,,  
The folded leaf is wooed from out the bud  
With winds upon the branch, and there  
Grows green and broad, and takes no care,

Sun-steeped at noon, and in the moon  
Nightly dew-fed ; and turning yellow  
Falls, and floats adown the air.  
Lo ! sweetened with the summer light,  
The full-juiced apple, waxing over-mellow,  
Drops in a silent autumn night.  
All its allotted length of days,  
The flower ripens in its place,  
Ripens and fades, and falls, and hath no toil,  
Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.

## 4.

Hateful is the dark-blue sky,  
Vaulted o'er the dark-blue sea.  
Death is the end of life ; ah, why  
Should life all labor be ?  
Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast,  
And in a little while our lips are dumb.  
Let us alone. What is it that will last ?  
All things are taken from us, and become  
Portions and parcels of the dreadful Past.  
Let us alone. What pleasure can we have  
To war with evil ? Is there any peace  
In ever climbing up the climbing wave ?  
All things have rest, and ripen toward the grave  
In silence ; ripen, fall and cease :  
Give us long rest or death, dark death or dreamful  
ease !

## 5.

How sweet it were, hearing the downward stream,  
With half-shut eyes ever to seem  
Falling asleep in a half-dream !  
To dream and dream, like yonder amber light,  
Which will not leave the myrrh-bush on the height ;  
To hear each other's whispered speech ;  
Eating the Lotos, day by day,  
To watch the crisping ripples on the beach,  
And tender-curving lines of creamy spray :

To lend our hearts and spirits wholly  
To the influence of mild-minded melancholy ;  
To muse and brood and live again in memory,  
With those old faces of our infancy  
Heaped over with a mound of grass,  
Two handfuls of white dust, shut in an urn of  
brass !

## 6.

Dear is the memory of our wedded lives,  
And dear the last embraces of our wives  
And their warm tears : but all hath suffered change ;  
For surely now our household hearths are cold :  
Our sons inherit us : our looks are strange :  
And we should come like ghosts to trouble joy.  
Or else the island princes, over-bold  
Have eat our substance, and the minstrel sings  
Before them of the ten-years' war in Troy,  
And our great deeds, as half-forgotten things.  
Is there confusion in the little isle ?  
Let what is broken so remain.  
The Gods are hard to reconcile :  
'Tis hard to settle order once again.  
There *is* confusion worse than death,  
Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,  
Long labor unto aged breath,  
Sore task to hearts worn out with many wars,  
And eyes grown dim with gazing on the pilot-stars.

## 7.

But, propt on beds of amaranth and moly,  
How sweet (while warm airs lull us, blowing lowly,)  
With half-dropt eyelids still,  
Beneath a heaven dark and holy,  
To watch the long bright river drawing slowly  
His waters from the purple hill—  
To hear the dewy echoes calling  
From cave to cave through the thick-twined vine—  
To watch the emerald-colored water falling

Through many a woven acanthus-wreath divine !  
Only to hear and see the far-off sparkling brine,  
Only to hear were sweet, stretched out beneath the  
    pine.

## 8.

The Lotos blooms below the barren peak :  
The Lotos blows by every winding creek :  
All day the wind breathes low with mellow tone ;  
Through every hollow cave and alley lone  
Round and round the spicy downs the yellow Lotos-  
    dust is blown.

We have had enough of action, and of motion we,  
Rolled to starboard, rolled to larboard, when the  
    surge was seething free,  
Where the wallowing monster spouted his foam-  
    fountains in the sea.

Let us swear an oath, and keep it with an equal  
    mind,

In the hollow Lotos-land to live and lie reclined  
On the hills like Gods together, careless of man-  
    kind.

For they lie beside their nectar, and the bolts are  
    hurled

Far below them in the valleys, and the clouds are  
    lightly curled

Round their golden houses, girdled with the gleam-  
    ing world ;

Where they smile in secret, looking over wasted  
    lands,

Blight and famine, plague and earthquake, roaring  
    deeps and fiery sands,

Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and sinking  
    ships, and praying hands.

But they smile, they find a music centred in a  
    doleful song

Steaming up, a lamentation and an ancient tale of  
    wrong,

Like a tale of little meaning, though the words are  
    strong ;

Chanted from an ill-used race of men that cleave  
     the soil,  
 Sow the seed, and reap the harvest with enduring  
     toil,  
 Storing yearly little dues of wheat, and wine and  
     oil ;  
 Till they perish and they suffer—some, 'tis whis-  
     pered—down in hell  
 Suffer endless anguish, others in Elysian valleys  
     dwell,  
 Resting weary limbs at last on beds of asphodel.  
 Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet than toil, the  
     shore  
 Than labor in the deep mid-ocean, wind and wave  
     and oar ;  
 O rest ye, brother mariners, we will not wander  
     more.

## A DREAM OF FAIR WOMEN.

### I.

I READ, before my eyelids dropt their shade,  
     *"The Legend of Good Women,"* long ago  
 Sung by the morning star of song, who made  
     His music heard below ;

### II.

Dan Chaucer, the first warbler, whose sweet breath  
     Preluded those melodious bursts, that fill  
 The spacious times of great Elizabeth  
     With sounds that echo still.

### III.

And, for a while, the knowledge of his art  
     Held me above the subject, as strong gales  
 Hold swollen clouds from raining, though my heart,  
     Brimful of those wild tales,

## IV.

Charged both mine eyes with tears. In every land  
I saw, wherever light illumineth,  
Beauty and anguish walking hand in hand  
The downward slope to death.

## V.

Those far-renowned brides of ancient song  
Peopled the hollow dark, like burning stars,  
And I heard sounds of insult, shame, and wrong,  
And trumpets blown for wars ;

## VI.

And clattering flints battered with clanging hoofs :  
And I saw crowds in columned sanctuaries ;  
And forms that passed at windows and on roofs  
Of marble palaces ;

## VII.

Corpses across the threshold ; heroes tall  
Dislodging pinnacle and parapet  
Upon the tortoise creeping to the wall ;  
Lancers in ambush set ;

## VIII.

And high shrine-doors burst through with heated  
    blasts  
That run before the fluttering tongues of fire ;  
White surf wind-scattered over sails and masts,  
And ever climbing higher ;

## IX.

Squadrons and squares of men in brazen plates,  
Scaffolds, still sheets of water, divers woes,  
Ranges of glimmering vaults with iron grates,  
And hushed seraglios.

## X.

So shape chased shape as swift as, when to land  
Bluster the winds and tides the self-same way,  
Crisp foam-flakes scud along the level sand,  
Torn from the fringe of spray.

## XI.

I started once, or seemed to start, in pain,  
Resolved on noble things, and strove to speak,  
As when a great thought strikes along the brain,  
And flushes all the cheek.

## XII.

And once my arm was lifted to hew down  
A cavalier from off his saddle-bow,  
That bore a lady from a leaguered town ;  
And then, I know not how,

## XIII.

All those sharp fancies, by down-lapsing thought  
Streamed onward, lost their edges, and did creep  
Rolled on each other, rounded, smoothed, and  
brought  
Into the gulfs of sleep.

## XIV.

At last methought that I had wandered far  
In an old wood : fresh-washed in coolest dew,  
The maiden splendors of the morning star  
Shook in the steadfast blue.

## XV.

Enormous elm-tree boles did stoop and lean  
Upon the dusky brushwood underneath  
Their broad curved branches, fledged with clearest  
green,  
New from its silken sheath.

## XVI.

The dim red morn had died, her journey done,  
And with dead lips smiled at the twilight plain,  
Half-fallen across the threshold of the sun,  
Never to rise again.

## XVII.

There was no motion in the dumb dead air,  
Not any song of bird or sound of rill ;  
Gross darkness of the inner sepulchre  
Is not so deadly still

## XVIII.

As that wide forest. Growths of jasmine turned  
Their humid arms festooning tree to tree,  
And at the root through lush green grasses burned  
The red anemone.

## XIX.

I knew the flowers, I knew the leaves, I knew  
The tearful glimmer of the languid dawn  
On those long, rank, dark wood-walks drenched in  
dew,  
Leading from lawn to lawn.

## XX.

The smell of violets, hidden in the green,  
Poured back into my empty soul and frame  
The times when I remember to have been  
Joyful and free from blame.

## XXI.

And from within me a clear under-tone  
Thrilled through mine ears in that unblissful  
clime,  
" Pass freely through ! the wood is all thine own,  
Until the end of time."



## XXII.

At length I saw a lady within call,  
Stillter than chiselled marble, standing there ;  
A daughter of the gods, divinely tall,  
And most divinely fair.

## XXIII.

Her loveliness with shame and with surprise  
Froze my swift speech ; she turning on my face  
The star-like sorrows of immortal eyes,  
Spoke slowly in her place.

## XXIV.

"I had great beauty : ask thou not my name :  
No one can be more wise than destiny.  
Many drew swords and died. Where'er I came  
I brought calamity."

## XXV.

"No marvel, sovereign lady ! in fair field,  
Myself for such a face had boldly died,"  
I answered free, and turning I appealed  
To one that stood beside.

## XXVI.

But she, with sick and scornful looks averse,  
To her full height her stately stature draws ;  
"My youth," she said, "was blasted with a curse :  
This woman was the cause.

## XXVII.

"I was cut off from hope in that sad place,  
Which yet to name my spirit loathes and fears ;  
My father held his hand upon his face :  
I, blinded with my tears,

## XXVIII.

"Still strove to speak : my voice was thick with sighs  
As in a dream. Dimly I could descry

The stern black-bearded kings, with wolfish eyes,  
Waiting to see me die.

## XXIX.

"The high masts flickered as they lay afloat ;  
The crowds, the temples, wavered, and the  
shore ;  
The bright death quivered at the victim's throat ;  
Touched ; and I knew no more."

## XXX.

Whereto the other with a downward brow :  
"I would the white cold heavy-plunging foam,  
Whirled by the wind, had rolled me deep below,  
Then when I left my home."

## XXXI.

Her slow full words sank through the silence drear,  
As thunder-drops fall on a sleeping sea :  
Sudden I heard a voice that cried, "Come here,  
That I may look on thee."

## XXXII.

I turning saw, throned on a flowery rise,  
One sitting on a crimson scarf unrolled ;  
A queen with swarthy cheeks and bold black eyes,  
Brow-bound with burning gold.

## XXXIII.

She, flashing forth a haughty smile, began :  
"I governed men by change, and so I swayed  
All moods. 'Tis long since I have seen a man.  
Once, like the moon, I made

## XXXIV.

"The ever-shifting currents of the blood  
According to my humor ebb and flow.  
I have no men to govern in this wood :  
That makes my only woe.

## XXXV.

"Nay—yet it chafes me that I could not bend  
One will ; nor tame and tutor with mine eye  
That dull cold-blooded Cæsar. Prithee, friend,  
Where is Mark Antony ?

## XXXVI.

"The man my lover, with whom I rode sublime  
On Fortune's neck : we sat as God by God :  
The Nilus would have risen before his time  
And flooded at our nod.

## XXXVII.

"We drank the Lybian Sun to sleep, and lit  
Lamps which outburned Canopus. O my life  
In Egypt ! O the dalliance and the wit,  
The flattery and the strife,

## XXXVIII.

"And the wild kiss, when fresh from war's alarms,  
My Hercules, my Roman Antony,  
My mailed Bacchus leapt into my arms,  
Contented there to die !

## XXXIX.

"And there he died ; and when I heard my name  
Sighed forth with life I would not brook my fear  
Of the other : with a worm I balked his fame.  
What else was left ?—look here !"

## XL.

(With that she tore her robe apart, and half  
The polished argent of her breast to sight  
Laid bare. Thereto she pointed with a laugh,  
Showing the aspick's bite :)

## XLI.

"I died a Queen. The Roman soldier found  
Me lying dead, my crown about my brows,

A name forever!—lying robed and crowned,  
Worthy a Roman spouse.”

## XLII.

Her warbling voice, a lyre of widest range  
Struck by all passion, did fall down and glance  
From tone to tone, and glided through all change  
Of liveliest utterance.

## XLIII.

When she made pause I knew not for delight ;  
Because with sudden motion from the ground  
She raised her piercing orbs and filled with light  
The interval of sound.

## XLIV.

Still with their fires Love tipt his keenest darts ;  
As once they drew into two burning rings  
All beams of Love, melting the mighty hearts  
Of captains and of kings.

## XLV.

Slowly my sense undazzled. Then I heard  
A noise of some one coming through the lawn,  
And singing clearer than the crested bird,  
That claps his wings at dawn.

## XLVI.

“ The torrent brooks of hallowed Israel  
From craggy hollows pouring, late and soon,  
Sound all night long, in falling through the dell,  
Far-heard beneath the moon.

## XLVII.

“ The balmy moon of blessed Israel  
Floods all the deep-blue gloom with beams  
divine :  
All night the splintered crags that wall the dell  
With spires of silver shine.”

## XLVIII.

As one that museth where broad sunshine laves  
The lawn by some cathedral, through the door  
Hearing the holy organ rolling waves  
Of sound on roof and floor

## XLIX.

Within, and anthem sung, is charmed and tied  
To where he stands,—so stood I, when that flow  
Of music left the lips of her that died  
To save her father's vow ;

## L.

The daughter of the warrior Gileadite,  
A maiden pure ; as when she went along  
From Mizpeh's towered gate with welcome light,  
With timbrel and with song.

## LI.

My words leapt forth : " Heaven heads the count  
of crimes  
With that wild oath." She rendered answer  
high :  
" Not so, nor once alone ; a thousand times  
I would be born and die.

## LII.

" Single I grew, like some green plant, whose root  
Creeps to the garden water-pipes beneath,  
Feeding the flower : but ere my flower to fruit  
Changed, I was ripe for death.

## LIII.

" My God, my land, my father—these did move  
Me from my bliss of life, that Nature gave,  
Lowered softly with a threefold cord of love  
Down to a silent grave.

## LIV.

“And I went mourning, ‘No fair Hebrew boy  
Shall smile away my maiden blame among  
The Hebrew mothers,’—emptied of all joy,  
Leaving the dance and song.

## LV.

“Leaving the olive-gardens far below,  
Leaving the promise of my bridal bower,  
The valleys of grape-loaded vines that glow  
Beneath the battled tower.

## LVI.

“The light white cloud swam over us. Anon  
We heard the lion roaring from his den;  
We saw the large white stars rise one by one,  
Or, from the darkened glen,

## LVII.

“Saw God divide the night with flying flame,  
And thunder on the everlasting hills.  
I heard Him, for He spake, and grief became  
A solemn scorn of ills.

## LVIII.

“When the next moon was rolled into the sky,  
Strength came to me that equalled my desire.  
How beautiful a thing it was to die  
For God and for my sire!

## LIX.

“It comforts me in this one thought to dwell,  
That I subdued me to my father’s will;  
Because the kiss he gave me, ere I fell,  
Sweetens the spirit still.

## LX.

“Moreover, it is written that my race  
Hewed Ammon, hip and thigh, from Aroer

On Arnon unto Minneth." Here her face  
Glowed, as I looked at her.

## LXI.

She locked her lips : she left me where I stood :  
"Glory to God," she sang, and past afar,  
Thridding the sombre boskage of the wood,  
Toward the morning-star.

## LXII.

Losing her carol I stood pensively,  
As one that from a casement leans his head,  
When midnight bells cease ringing suddenly,  
And the old year is dead.

## LXIII.

"Alas ! alas !" a low voice, full of care,  
Murmured beside me ; "Turn and look on me :  
I am that Rosamond, whom men call fair,  
If what I was I be.

## LXIV.

"Would I had been some maiden coarse and poor !  
O me ! that I should ever see the light !  
Those dragon eyes of angered Eleanor  
Do hunt me, day and night."

## LXV.

She ceased in tears, fallen from hope and trust :  
To whom the Egyptian : "O, you tamely died !  
You should have clung to Fulvia's waist, and thrust  
The dagger through her side."

## LXVI.

With that sharp sound the white dawn's creeping  
beams,  
Stolen to my brain, dissolved the mystery  
Of folded sleep. The captain of my dreams  
Ruled in the eastern sky.

## LXVII.

Morn broadened on the borders of the dark,  
Ere I saw her who clasped in her last trance  
Her murdered father's head, or Joan of Arc,  
A light of ancient France ;

## LXVIII.

Or her, who knew that Love can vanquish Death,  
Who kneeling, with one arm about her king,  
Drew forth the poison with her balmy breath,  
Sweet as new buds in Spring.

## LXIX.

No memory labors longer from the deep  
Gold-mines of thought to lift the hidden ore  
That glimpses, moving up, than I from sleep  
To gather and tell o'er

## LXX.

Each little sound and sight. With what dull pain  
Compassed, how eagerly I sought to strike  
Into that wondrous track of dreams again !  
But no two dreams are like.

## LXXI.

As when a soul laments, which hath been blest,  
Desiring what is mingled with past years,  
In yearnings that can never be exprest  
By signs or groans or tears ;

## LXXII.

Because all words, though culled with choicest art,  
Failing to give the bitter of the sweet,  
Wither beneath the palate, and the heart  
Faints, faded by its heat.



## M A R G A R E T .

O SWEET pale Margaret,  
O rare pale Margaret,  
What lit your eyes with tearful power,  
Like moonlight on a falling shower?  
Who lent you, love, your mortal dower  
    Of pensive thought and aspect pale,  
    Your melancholy, sweet and frail  
As perfume of the cuckoo-flower?  
From the westward-winding flood,  
From the evening-lighted wood,  
    From all things outward you have won  
A tearful grace, as though you stood  
    Between the rainbow and the sun.

The very smile before you speak,  
That dimples your transparent cheek,  
    Encircles all the heart, and feedeth  
The senses with a still delight  
    Of dainty sorrow without sound,  
    Like the tender amber round,  
    Which the moon about her spreadeth,  
Moving through a fleecy night.

You love, remaining peacefully,  
    To hear the murmur of the strife,  
    But enter not the toil of life.  
Your spirit is the calmed sea,  
    Laid by the tumult of the fight.  
You are the evening star, alway  
    Remaining betwixt dark and bright:  
Lulled echoes of laborious day  
    Come to you, gleams of mellow light  
    Float by you on the verge of night.

What can it matter, Margaret,  
    What songs below the waning stars

The lion-heart, Plantagenet,  
Sang looking through his prison bars ?  
Exquisite Margaret, who can tell  
The last wild thought of Chatelet,  
Just ere the falling axe did part  
The burning brain from the true heart,  
Even in her sight he loved so well ?

A fairy shield your Genius made  
And gave you on your natal day.  
Your sorrow, only sorrow's shade,  
Keeps real sorrow far away.  
You move not in such solitudes,  
You are not less divine,  
But more human in your moods,  
Than your twin-sister, Adeline.  
Your hair is darker, and your eyes  
Touched with a somewhat darker hue,  
And less aërially blue,  
But ever trembling through the dew  
Of dainty-woful sympathies.

O sweet pale Margaret,  
O rare pale Margaret,  
Come down, come down, and hear me speak :  
Tie up the ringlets on your cheek :  
The sun is just about to set.  
The arching limes are tall and shady,  
And faint, rainy lights are seen,  
Moving in the leavy beech.  
Rise from the feast of sorrow, lady,  
Where all day long you sit between  
Joy and woe, and whisper each.  
Or only look across the lawn,  
Look out below your bower-eaves,  
Look down, and let your blue eyes dawn  
Upon me through the jasmine-leaves.

## THE BLACKBIRD.

O BLACKBIRD ! sing me something well :  
While all the neighbors shoot thee round,  
I keep smooth plats of fruitful ground,  
Where thou may'st warble, eat and dwell.

The espaliers and the standards all  
Are thine ; the range of lawn and park :  
The unnetted blackhearts ripen dark,  
All thine, against the garden wall.

Yet, though I spared thee all the spring,  
Thy sole delight is, sitting still,  
With that gold dagger of thy bill  
To fret the summer jenneting.

A golden bill ! the silver tongue,  
Cold February loved, is dry :  
Plenty corrupts the melody  
That made thee famous once, when young :

And in the sultry garden-squares,  
Now thy flute-notes are changed to coarse,  
I hear thee not at all, or hoarse  
As when a hawker hawks his wares.

Take warning ! he that will not sing  
While yon sun prospers in the blue,  
Shall sing for want, ere leaves are new,  
Caught in the frozen palms of Spring.

## THE DEATH OF THE OLD YEAR.

## I.

FULL knee-deep lies the winter snow,  
 And the winter winds are wearily sighing:  
 Toll ye the church-bell sad and slow,  
 And tread softly and speak low,  
 For the old year lies a-dying.

Old year, you must not die ;  
 You came to us so readily,  
 You lived with us so steadily,  
 Old year, you shall not die.

## II.

He lieth still : he doth not move :  
 He will not see the dawn of day.  
 He hath no other life above.  
 He gave me a friend, and a true, true-love,  
 And the New-year will take 'em away.

Old year, you must not go ;  
 So long as you have been with us,  
 Such joy as you have seen with us,  
 Old year, you shall not go.

## III.

He frothed his bumpers to the brim ;  
 A jollier year we shall not see.  
 But though his eyes are waxing dim,  
 And though his foes speak ill of him,  
 He was a friend to me.

Old year, you shall not die ;  
 We did so laugh and cry with you,  
 I've half a mind to die with you,  
 Old year, if you must die.

## IV.

He was full of joke and jest,  
 But all his merry quips are o'er.

To see him die, across the waste  
 His son and heir doth ride post-haste,  
 But he'll be dead before.

Every one for his own.

The night is starry and cold, my friend,  
 And the New-year, blithe and bold, my friend,  
 Comes up to take his own.

## V.

How hard he breathes! over the snow  
 I heard just now the crowing cock.  
 The shadows flicker to and fro:  
 The cricket chirps: the light burns low:  
 'Tis nearly twelve o'clock.

Shake hands, before you die.

Old year, we'll dearly rue for you:

What is it we can do for you?

Speak out before you die.

## VI.

His face is growing sharp and thin.  
 Alack! our friend is gone.  
 Close up his eyes: tie up his chin:  
 Step from the corpse, and let him in  
 That standeth there alone,

And waiteth at the door.

There's a new foot on the floor, my friend,

And a new face at the door, my friend,

A new face at the door.

## TO J. S.

## I.

THE wind, that beats the mountain, blows  
 More softly round the open wold,  
 And gently comes the world to those  
 That are cast in gentle mould.

## II.

And me this knowledge bolder made,  
Or else I had not dared to flow  
In these words toward you, and invade  
Even with a verse your holy woe.

## III.

'Tis strange that those we lean on most,  
Those in whose laps our limbs are nursed,  
Fall into shadow, soonest lost :  
Those we love first are taken first.

## IV.

God gives us love. Something to love  
He lends us ; but, when love is grown  
To ripeness, that on which it throve  
Falls off, and love is left alone.

## V.

This is the curse of time. Alas !  
In grief I am not all unlearned ;  
Once through mine own doors Death did pass ;  
One went, who never hath returned.

## VI.

He will not smile—not speak to me  
Once more. Two years his chair is seen  
Empty before us. That was he  
Without whose life I had not been.

## VII.

Your loss is rarer ; for this star  
Rose with you through a little arc  
Of heaven, nor having wandered far,  
Shot on the sudden into dark.

## VIII.

I knew your brother : his mute dust  
I honor, and his living worth :

A man more pure and bold and just  
Was never born into the earth.

## IX.

I have not looked upon you nigh,  
Since that dear soul hath fallen asleep.  
Great Nature is more wise than I:  
I will not tell you not to weep.

## X.

And though my own eyes fill with dew,  
Drawn from the spirit through the brain,  
I will not even preach to you,  
“ Weep, weeping dulls the inward pain.”

## XI.

Let Grief be her own mistress still.  
She loveth her own anguish deep  
More than much pleasure. Let her will  
Be done—to weep or not to weep.

## XII.

I will not say “ God’s ordinance  
Of Death is blown in every wind ; ”  
For that is not a common chance  
That takes away a noble mind.

## XIII.

His memory long will live alone  
In all our hearts, as mournful light  
That broods above the fallen sun,  
And dwells in heaven half the night.

## XIV.

Vain solace ! Memory standing near  
Cast down her eyes, and in her throat  
Her voice seemed distant, and a tear  
Dropt on the letters as I wrote.

## XV.

I wrote I know not what. In truth,  
How *should* I soothe you anyway,  
Who miss the brother of your youth?  
Yet something I did wish to say :

## XVI.

For he too was a friend to me :  
Both are my friends, and my true breast  
Bleedeth for both ; yet it may be  
That only silence suiteth best.

## XVII.

Words weaker than your grief would make  
Grief more. 'Twere better I should cease  
Although myself could almost take  
The place of him that sleeps in peace :

## XVIII.

Sleep sweetly, tender heart, in peace :  
Sleep, holy spirit, blessed soul,  
While the stars burn, the moons increase,  
And the great ages onward roll.

## XIX.

Sleep till the end, true soul and sweet.  
Nothing comes to thee new or strange.  
Sleep full of rest from head to feet ;  
Lie still, dry dust, secure of change.

“YOU ASK ME, WHY, THOUGH ILL  
AT EASE.”

You ask me, why, though ill at ease,  
Within this region I subsist,  
Whose spirits falter in the mist,  
And languish for the purple seas ?



It is the land that freemen till,  
That sober-suited Freedom chose,  
The land where, girt with friends or foes,  
A man may speak the thing he will ;

A land of settled government,  
A land of just and old renown,  
Where Freedom broadens slowly down  
From precedent to precedent :

Where faction seldom gathers head,  
But by degrees to fulness wrought,  
The strength of some diffusive thought  
Hath time and space to work and spread.

Should banded unions persecute  
Opinion, and induce a time  
When single thought is civil crime,  
And individual freedom mute ;

Though Power should make from land to land  
The name of Britain trebly great—  
Though every channel of the State  
Should almost choke with golden sand—

Yet waft me from the harbor-mouth,  
Wild wind ! I seek a warmer sky,  
And I will see before I die  
The palms and temples of the South.

“OF OLD SAT FREEDOM ON THE  
HEIGHTS.”

Of old sat Freedom on the heights,  
The thunders breaking at her feet :  
Above her shook the starry lights :  
She heard the torrents meet.

There in her place she did rejoice,  
Self-gathered in her prophet-mind,  
But fragments of her mighty voice  
Came rolling on the wind.

Then stept she down through town and field  
To mingle with the human race,  
And part by part to men revealed  
The fulness of her face—

Grave mother of majestic works,  
From her isle-altar gazing down,  
Who, God-like, grasps the triple forks,  
And, King-like, wears the crown :

Her open eyes desire the truth.  
The wisdom of a thousand years  
Is in them. May perpetual youth  
Keep dry their light from tears ;

That her fair form may stand and shine,  
Make bright our days and light our dreams,  
Turning to scorn with lips divine  
The falsehood of extremes !

“LOVE THOU THY LAND, WITH LOVE  
FAR BROUGHT.”

LOVE thou thy land, with love far brought  
From out the storied Past, and used  
Within the Present, but transfused  
Through future time by power of thought.

True love turned round on fixed poles,  
Love that endures not sordid ends,  
For English natures, freemen, friends,  
Thy brothers and immortal souls.

But pamper not a hasty time,  
Nor feed with crude imaginings  
The herd, wild hearts and feeble wings,  
That every sophister can lime.

Deliver not the tasks of might  
To weakness, neither hide the ray  
From those, not blind, who wait for day,  
Though sitting girt with doubtful light.

Make knowledge circle with the winds ;  
But let her herald, Reverence, fly  
Before her to whatever sky  
Bear seed of men and growth of minds.

Watch what main-currents draw the years :  
Cut Prejudice against the grain :  
But gentle words are always gain :  
Regard the weakness of thy peers :

Nor toil for title, place, or touch  
Of pension, neither count on praise :  
It grows to guerdon after-days :  
Nor deal in watchwords overmuch ;

Not clinging to some ancient saw :  
Not mastered by some modern term ;  
Not swift nor slow to change, but firm :  
And in its season bring the law ;

That from Discussion's lip may fall  
With Life, that, working strongly, binds—  
Set in all lights by many minds,  
To close the interests of all.

For Nature also, cold and warm,  
And moist and dry, devising long,  
Through many agents making strong,  
Matures the individual form.

Meet is it changes should control  
Our being, lest we rust in ease.  
We all are changed by still degrees,  
All-but the basis of the soul.

So let the change which comes be free  
To ingroove itself with that, which flies,  
And work, a joint of state, that plies  
Its office, moved with sympathy.

A saying hard to shape in act ;  
For all the past of Time reveals  
A bridal dawn of thunder-peals,  
Wherever Thought hath wedded Fact.

Even now we hear with inward strife  
A motion toiling in the gloom—  
The Spirit of the years to come  
Yearning to mix himself with Life.

A slow-developed strength awaits  
Completion in a painful school ;  
Phantoms of other forms of rule,  
New Majesties of mighty States—

The warders of the growing hour,  
But vague in vapor, hard to mark ;  
And round them sea and air are dark  
With great contrivances of Power.

Of many changes, aptly joined,  
Is bodied forth the second whole.  
Regard gradation, lest the soul  
Of Discord race the rising wind :

A wind to puff your idol-fires,  
And heap their ashes on the head ;  
To shame the boast so often made,  
That we are wiser than our sires.

O yet, if Nature's evil star  
Drive men in manhood, as in youth,  
To follow flying steps of Truth  
Across the brazen bridge of war—

If New and Old, disastrous feud,  
Must ever shock, like armed foes,  
And this be true, till Time shall close,  
That Principles are rained in blood ;

Not yet the wise of heart would cease  
To hold his hope through shame and guilt.  
But with his hand against the hilt,  
Would pace the troubled land, like Peace ;

Not less, though dogs of Faction bay,  
Would serve his kind in deed and word,  
Certain, if knowledge bring the sword,  
That knowledge takes the sword away—

Would love the gleams of good that broke  
From either side, nor veil his eyes :  
And if some dreadful need should rise,  
Would strike, and firmly, and one stroke :

To-morrow yet would reap to-day,  
As we bear blossom of the dead ;  
Earn well the thrifty months, nor wed  
Raw Haste, half-sister to Delay.

## THE GOOSE.

### I.

I KNEW an old wife lean and poor,  
Her rags scarce held together ;  
There strode a stranger to the door,  
And it was windy weather.

## II.

He held a goose upon his arm,  
He uttered rhyme and reason,  
“Here, take the goose, and keep you warm,  
It is a stormy season.”

## III.

She caught the white goose by the leg,  
A goose—’twas no great matter.  
The goose let fall a golden egg  
With cackle and with clatter.

## IV.

She dropt the goose, and caught the pelf,  
And ran to tell her neighbors;  
And blessed herself, and cursed herself,  
And rested from her labors.

## V.

And feeding high, and living soft,  
Grew plump and able-bodied;  
Until the grave churchwarden doffed,  
The parson smirked and nodded.

## VI.

So sitting, served by man and maid,  
She felt her heart grow prouder:  
But ah! the more the white goose laid,  
It clacked and cackled louder.

## VII.

It cluttered here, it chuckled there;  
It stirred the old wife’s mettle:  
She shifted in her elbow-chair,  
And hurled the pan and kettle.

## VIII.

“A quinsy choke thy cursed note!”  
Then waxed her anger stronger.

“Go, take the goose, and wring her throat,  
I will not bear it longer.”

## IX.

Then yelped the cur, and yawled the cat;  
Ran Gaffer, stumbled Gammer.  
The goose flew this way and flew that,  
And filled the house with clamor.

## X.

As head and heels upon the floor  
They floundered all together,  
There strode a stranger to the door,  
And it was windy weather :

## XI.

He took the goose upon his arm,  
He uttered words of scorning;  
“So keep you cold, or keep you warm,  
It is a stormy morning.”

## XII.

The wild wind rang from park and plain,  
And round the attics rumbled,  
Till all the tables danced again,  
And half the chimneys tumbled.

## XIII.

The glass blew in, the fire blew out,  
The blast was hard and harder.  
Her cap blew off, her gown blew up,  
And a whirlwind cleared the larder ;

## XIV.

And while on all sides breaking loose  
Her household fled the danger,  
Quoth she, “The Devil take the goose,  
And God forget the stranger !”

## THE EPIC.

AT Francis Allen's on the Christmas-eve,—  
 The game of forfeits done—the girls all kissed  
 Beneath the sacred bush and past away—  
 The parson Holmes, the poet Everard Hall,  
 The host and I, sat round the wassail-bowl,  
 Then half-way ebb'd : and there we held a talk,  
 How all the old honor had from Christmas gone,  
 Or gone, or dwindled down to some odd games  
 In some odd nooks like this ; till I, tired out  
 With cutting eights that day upon the pond,  
 Where, three times slipping from the outer edge,  
 I bumped the ice into three several stars,  
 Fell in a doze ; and half-awake I heard  
 The parson taking wide and wider sweeps,  
 Now harping on the church-commissioners,  
 Now hawking at Geology and schism ;  
 Until I woke, and found him settled down  
 Upon the general decay of faith  
 Right through the world—"at home was little left,  
 And none abroad : there was no anchor, none,  
 To hold by." Francis, laughing, clapt his hand  
 On Everard's shoulder, with "I hold by him."  
 "And I," quoth Everard, "by the wassail-bowl."  
 "Why yes," I said, "we knew your gift that way  
 At college : but another which you had,  
 I mean of verse, (for so we held it then,)  
 What came of that?" "You know," said Frank,  
     "he burnt  
 His epic of King Arthur, some twelve books"—  
 And then to me demanding why ? "O, sir,  
 He thought that nothing new was said, or else  
 Something so said 'twas nothing—that a truth  
 Looks freshest in the fashion of the day :  
 God knows : he has a mint of reasons : ask.  
 It pleased *me* well enough." "Nay, nay," said Hall,  
 "Why take the style of those heroic times ?



For nature brings not back the Mastodon,  
 Nor we those times; and why should any man  
 Remodel models? these twelve books of mine  
 Were faint Homeric echoes, nothing worth,  
 Mere chaff and draff, much better burnt." "But I,"  
 Said Francis, "picked the eleventh from this hearth,  
 And have it: keep a thing, its use will come.  
 I hoard it as a sugar-plum for Holmes."  
 He laughed, and I, though sleepy, like a horse  
 That hears the corn-bin open, pricked my ears;  
 For I remembered Everard's college fame  
 When we were Freshmen: then at my request  
 He brought it; and the poet, little urged,  
 But with some prelude of disparagement,  
 Read, mouthing out his hollow oes and aes,  
 Deep-chested music, and to this result.

## MORTE D'ARTHUR.

So all day long the noise of battle rolled  
 Among the mountains by the winter sea;  
 Until King Arthur's table, man by man,  
 Had fallen in Lyonness about their Lord,  
 King Arthur: then, because his wound was deep,  
 The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,  
 Sir Bedivere, the last of all his knights,  
 And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,  
 A broken chancel with a broken cross,  
 That stood on a dark strait of barren land.  
 On one side lay the Ocean, and on one  
 Lay a great water, and the moon was full.  
 Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:  
 "The sequel of to-day unsolders all  
 The goodliest fellowship of famous knights  
 Whereof this world holds record. Such a sleep  
 They sleep—the men I loved. I think that we  
 Shall never more, at any future time,  
 Delight our souls with talk of knightly deeds,

Walking about the gardens and the halls  
Of Camelot, as in the days that were.  
I perish by this people which I made,—  
Though Merlin sware that I should come again  
To rule once more—but let what will be, be,  
I am so deeply smitten through the helm  
That without help I cannot last till morn.  
Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur,  
Which was my pride : for thou rememberest how  
In those old days, one summer noon, an arm  
Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,  
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,  
Holding the sword—and how I rowed across  
And took it, and have worn it, like a king :  
And, wheresoever I am sung or told  
In aftertime this also shall be known :  
But now delay not : take Excalibur,  
And fling him far into the middle meer :  
Watch what thou seest, and lightly bring me word.”

To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere :  
“ It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee thus,  
Aidless, alone, and smitten through the helm.  
A little thing may harm a wounded man.  
Yet I thy hest will all perform at full,  
Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee word.”

So saying, from the ruined shrine he stept,  
And in the moon athwart the place of tombs,  
Where lay the mighty bones of ancient men,  
Old knights, and over them the sea-wind sang  
Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He, stepping down  
By zigzag paths, and juts of pointed rock,  
Came on the shining levels of the lake.

There drew he forth the brand Excalibur,  
And o'er him, drawing it, the winter moon,  
Brightening the skirts of a long cloud, ran forth  
And sparkled keen with frost against the hilt :  
For all the haft twinkled with diamond sparks,  
Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work  
Of subtlest jewellery. He gazed so long

That both his eyes were dazzled, as he stood  
This way and that dividing the swift mind,  
In act to throw; but at the last it seemed  
Better to leave Excalibur concealed  
There in the many-knotted waterflags,  
That whistled stiff and dry about the marge.  
So strode he back slow to the wounded King.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere :

Hast thou performed my mission which I gave ?  
What is it thou hast seen ? or what hast heard ? ”

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere :

“ I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,  
And the wild water lapping on the crag.”

To whom replied King Arthur, faint and pale :  
“ Thou hast betrayed thy nature and thy name,  
Not rendering true answer, as beseemed  
Thy fealty, nor like a noble knight :  
For surer sign had followed, either hand  
Or voice, or else a motion of the meer.  
This is a shameful thing for men to lie.  
Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again  
As thou art lief and dear, and do the thing  
I bade thee, watch, and lightly bring me word.”

Then went Sir Bedivere the second time  
Across the ridge, and paced beside the mere,  
Counting the dewy pebbles, fixed in thought ;  
But when he saw the wonder of the hilt,  
How curiously and strangely chased, he smote  
His palms together, and he cried aloud.

“ And if indeed I cast the brand away,  
Surely a precious thing, one worthy note,  
Should thus be lost forever from the earth,  
Which might have pleased the eyes of many men.  
What good should follow this, if this were done ?  
What harm, undone ? deep harm to disobey,  
Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.  
Were it well to obey then, if a king demand  
An act unprofitable, against himself ?  
The king is sick, and knows not what he does.  
What record, or what relic of my lord

Should be to aftertime, but empty breath  
And rumors of a doubt ? but were this kept,  
Stored in some treasure-house of mighty kings,  
Some one might show it at a joust of arms,  
Saying, 'King Arthur's sword, Excalibur,  
Wrought by the lonely maiden of the Lake.  
Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the deeps  
Upon the hidden bases of the hills.'  
So might some old man speak in the aftertime  
To all the people, winning reverence.  
But now much honor and much fame were lost."

So spake he, clouded with his own conceit,  
And hid Excalibur the second time,  
And so strode back slow to the wounded King.

Then spoke King Arthur, breathing heavily :  
"What is it thou hast seen ? or what hast heard ?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere :

"I heard 'he water lapping on the crag,  
And the long ripple washing in the reeds."

To whom replied King Arthur, much in wrath :

"Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue,  
Unknightly, traitor-hearted ! Woe is me !  
Authority forgets a dying king,  
Laid widowed of the power in his eye  
That bowed the will. I see thee what thou art.  
For thou, the latest left of all my knights,  
In whom should meet the offices of all,  
Thou wouldst betray me for the precious hilt ;  
Either from lust of gold, or like a girl  
Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.  
Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,  
And the third time may prosper, get thee hence :  
But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,  
I will arise and slay thee with my hands."

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran,  
And, leaping down the ridges lightly, plunged  
Among the bulrush-beds, and clutched the sword,  
And strongly wheeled and threw it. The great brand  
Made lightnings in the splendor of the moon,

And flashing round and round, and whirled in an  
arch,

Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,  
Seen where the moving isles of winter shock  
By night, with noises of the northern sea.  
So flashed and fell the brand Excalibur :  
But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm  
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,  
And caught him by the hilt, and brandished him  
Three times, and drew him under in the meer.  
And lightly went the other to the King.

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing thicker breath:  
" Now see I by thine eyes that this is done.  
Speak out: what is it thou hast heard, or seen ! "

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere :  
" Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the gems  
Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,  
Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,  
Not though I live three lives of mortal men,  
So great a miracle as yonder hilt.  
Then with both hands I flung him, wheeling him ;  
But when I looked again, behold an arm,  
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,  
That caught him by the hilt, and brandished him  
Three times, and drew him under in the meer. "

And answer made King Arthur, breathing hard :  
" My end draws nigh ; ' tis time that I were gone.  
Make broad thy shoulders to receive my weight,  
And bear me to the margin ; yet I fear  
My wound hath taken cold, and I shall die. "

So saying, from the pavement he half rose,  
Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,  
And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes  
As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere  
Remorsefully regarded through his tears,  
And would have spoken, but he found not words,  
Then took with care, and kneeling on one knee,  
O'er both his shoulders drew the languid hands,  
And rising bore him through the place of tombs.

But, as he walked, King Arthur panted hard  
Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed  
When all the house is mute. So sighed the King,  
Muttering and murmuring at his ear, "Quick,  
quick !

I fear it is too late, and I shall die."

But the other swiftly strode from ridge to ridge,  
Clothed with his breath, and looking, as he walked,  
Larger than human on the frozen hills.

He heard the deep behind him, and a cry  
Before. His own thought drove him like a goad.

Dry clashed his harness in the icy caves  
And barren chasms, and all to left and right  
The bare black cliff clanged round him, as he based  
His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang  
Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed heels—  
And on a sudden, lo ! the level lake,  
And the long glories of the winter moon.

Then saw they how there hove a dusky barge,  
Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,  
Beneath them ; and descending they were ware  
That all the decks were dense with stately forms  
Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream—by these  
Three Queens with crowns of gold—and from them  
rose

A cry that shivered to the tingling stars,  
And, as it were one voice, an agony  
Of lamentation, like a wind, that shrills  
All night in a waste land, where no one comes,  
Or hath come, since the making of the world.  
Then murmured Arthur, "Place me in the barge,"  
And to the barge they came. There those three

Queens

Put forth their hands, and took the King, and  
wept.

But she that rose the tallest of them all  
And fairest, laid his head upon her lap,  
And loosed the shattered casque, and chafed his  
hands,

And called him by his name, complaining loud,  
And dropping bitter tears against his brow  
Striped with dark blood: for all his face was white  
And colorless, and like the withered moon  
Smote by the fresh beam of the springing east;  
And all his greaves and cuisses dashed with drops  
Of onset: and the light and lustrous curls—  
That made his forehead like a rising sun  
High from the dais-throne—were parched with  
dust;

Or, clotted into points and hanging loose,  
Mixed with the knightly growth that fringed his  
lips.

So like a shattered column lay the King;  
Not like that Arthur who, with lance in rest,  
From spur to plume a star of tournament,  
Shot through the lists at Camelot, and charged  
Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.

Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedivere,  
“Ah! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I go?  
Where shall I hide my forehead and my eyes?  
For now I see the true old times are dead,  
When every morning brought a noble chance,  
And every chance brought out a noble knight.  
Such times have been not since the light that led  
The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.  
But now the whole ROUND TABLE is dissolved  
Which was an image of the mighty world;  
And I, the last, go forth companionless,  
And the days darken round me, and the years,  
Among new men, strange faces, other minds.”

And slowly answered Arthur from the barge:  
“The old order changeth, yielding place to new,  
And God fulfils himself in many ways,  
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.  
Comfort thyself: what comfort is in me?  
I have lived my life, and that which I have done  
May He within himself make pure! but thou,  
If thou shouldst never see my face again,

Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by  
prayer

Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy  
voice

Rise like a fountain for me night and day.

For what are men better than sheep or goats

That nourish a blind life within the brain,

If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer

Both for themselves and those who call them  
friend ?

For so the whole round earth is every way

Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.

But now farewell. I am going a long way

With these thou seest—if indeed I go

(For all my mind is clouded with a doubt)

To the island-valley of Avilion ;

Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,

Nor ever wind blows loudly ; but it lies

Deep-meadowed, happy, fair with orchard-lawns

And bowery hollows crowned with summer sea,

Where I will heal me of my grievous wound."

So said he, and the barge with oar and sail

Moved from the brink, like some full-breasted swan,

That, fluting a wild carol, ere her death,

Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the flood

With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir Bedivere

Revolving many memories, till the hull

Looked one black dot against the verge of dawn,

And on the meer the wailing died away.

Here ended Hall, and our last light, that long  
Had winked and threatened darkness, flared and  
fell ;

At which the Parson, sent to sleep with sound,  
And waked with silence, grunted " Good ! " but we  
Sat rapt : it was the tone with which he read—  
Perhaps some modern touches here and there



Redeemed it from the charge of nothingness—  
Or else we loved the man, and prized his work ;  
I know not : but we sitting, as I said,  
The cock crew loud : as at that time of year  
The lusty bird takes every hour for dawn :  
Then Francis, muttering, like a man ill-used,  
“ There now—that’s nothing ! ” drew a little back,  
And drove his heel into the smouldered log,  
That sent a blast of sparkles up the flue :  
And so to bed ; where yet in sleep I seemed  
To sail with Arthur under looming shores,  
Point after point, till on to dawn, when dreams  
Begin to feel the truth and stir of day,  
To me, methought, who waited with a crowd,  
There came a bark that, blowing forward, bore  
King Arthur, like a modern gentleman  
Of stateliest port ; and all the people cried,  
“ Arthur is come again : he cannot die.”  
Then those that stood upon the hills behind  
Repeated—“ Come again, and thrice as fair ; ”  
And, further inland, voices echoed—“ Come  
With all good things, and war shall be no more.”  
At this a hundred bells began to peal,  
That with the sound I woke, and heard indeed  
The clear church-bells ring in the Christmas morn.

## THE GARDENER'S DAUGHTER ;

OR,

### THE PICTURES.

THIS morning is the morning of the day  
When I and Eustace from the city went  
To see the Gardener's Daughter ; I and he,  
Brothers in Art ; a friendship so complete  
Portioned in halves between us, that we grew  
The fable of the city where we dwelt.

My Eustace might have sat for Hercules;  
So muscular he spread, so broad a breast.  
He, by some law that holds in love, and draws  
The greater to the lesser, long desired  
A certain miracle of symmetry,  
A miniature of loveliness, all grace  
Summed up and closed in little;—Juliet, she  
So light of foot, so light of spirit—oh, she  
To me myself, for some three careless moons,  
The summer pilot of an empty heart  
Unto the shores of nothing! Know you not  
Such touches are but embassies of love,  
To tamper with the feelings, ere he found  
Empire for life? but Eustace painted her,  
And said to me, she sitting with us then,  
“When will *you* paint like this?” and I replied,  
(My words were half in earnest, half in jest,)  
“’Tis not your work, but Love’s. Love unper-  
ceived.

A more ideal Artist he than all,  
Came, drew your pencil from you, made those eyes  
Darker than darkest pansies, and that hair  
More black than ashbuds in the front of March.”  
And Juliet answered laughing, “Go and see  
The Gardener’s daughter: trust me, after that,  
You scarce can fail to match his masterpiece.”  
And up we rose, and on the spur we went.

Not wholly in the busy world, nor quite  
Beyond it, blooms the garden that I love.  
News from the humming city comes to it  
In sound of funeral or of marriage bells;  
And, sitting muffled in dark leaves, you hear  
The windy clanging of the minster clock;  
Although between it and the garden lies  
A league of grass, washed by a slow broad stream,  
That, stirred with languid pulses of the oar,  
Waves all its lazy lilies, and creeps on,  
Barge-laden, to three arches of a bridge  
Crowned with the minster-towers.

The fields between  
Are dewy-fresh, browsed by deep-uddered kine,  
And all about the large lime feathers low,  
The lime a summer home of murmurous wings.

In that still place she, hoarded in herself,  
Grew, seldom seen : not less among us lived  
Her fame from lip to lip. Who had not heard  
Of Rose, the Gardener's daughter? Where was  
he,

So blunt in memory, so old at heart,  
At such a distance from his youth in grief,  
That, having seen, forgot? The common mouth,  
So gross to express delight, in praise of her  
Grew oratory. Such a lord is Love,  
And Beauty such a mistress of the world.

And if I said that Fancy, led by Love,  
Would play with flying forms and images,  
Yet this is also true, that, long before  
I looked upon her, when I heard her name  
My heart was like a prophet to my heart,  
And told me I should love. A crowd of hopes,  
That sought to sow themselves like winged seeds,  
Born out of every thing I heard and saw,  
Fluttered about my senses and my soul ;  
And vague desires, like fitful blasts of balm  
To one that travels quickly, made the air  
Of Life delicious, and all kinds of thought,  
That verged upon them, sweeter than the dream  
Dreamed by a happy man, when the dark East,  
Unseen, is brightening to his bridal morn.

And sure this orbit of the memory folds  
Forever in itself the day we went  
To see her. All the land in flowery squares,  
Beneath a broad and equal-blowing wind,  
Smelt of the coming summer, as one large cloud  
Drew downward : but all else of Heaven was pure  
Up to the Sun, and May from verge to verge,  
And May with me from head to heel. And now,  
As though 'twere yesterday, as though it were

The hour just flown, that morn with all its sound,  
(For those old Mays had thrice the life of these,)  
Rings in mine ears. The steer forgot to graze,  
And, where the hedge-row cuts the pathway, stood,  
Leaning his horns into the neighbor field,  
And lowing to his fellows. From the woods  
Came voices of the well-contented doves.  
The lark could scarce get out his notes for joy,  
But shook his song together as he neared  
His happy home, the ground. To left and right,  
The cuckoo told his name to all the hills;  
The mellow ouzel fluted in the elm;  
The redcap whistled; and the nightingale  
Sang loud, as though he were the bird of day.

And Eustace turned, and smiling said to me,  
"Hear how the bushes echo! by my life,  
These birds have joyful thoughts. Think you they  
sing

Like poets, from the vanity of song?  
Or have they any sense of why they sing?  
And would they praise the heavens for what they  
have?"

And I made answer, "Were there nothing else  
For which to praise the heavens but only love,  
That only love were cause enough for praise."

Lightly he laughed, as one that read my thought,  
And on we went; but ere an hour had passed,  
We reached a meadow slanting to the North;  
Down which a well-worn pathway courted us  
To one green wicket in a privet hedge;  
This, yielding, gave into a grassy walk  
Through crowded lilac-ambush trimly pruned;  
And one warm gust, full-fed with perfume, blew  
Beyond us, as we entered in the cool.  
The garden stretches southward. In the midst  
A cedar spread his dark-green layers of shade.  
The garden-glasses shone, and momentarily  
The twinkling laurel scattered silver lights.

"Eustace," I said, "this wonder keeps the house."

He nodded, but a moment afterwards  
He cried, "Look! look!" Before he ceased I  
turned,

And, ere a star can wink, beheld her there.

For up the porch there grew an Eastern rose,  
That, flowering high, the last night's gale had caught,  
And blown across the walk. One arm aloft—

Gowned in pure white, that fitted to the shape—  
Holding the bush, to fix it back, she stood.

A single stream of all her soft brown hair  
Poured on one side: the shadow of the flowers

Stole all the golden gloss, and, wavering,  
Lovingly lower, trembled on her waist—

Ah, happy shade!—and still went wavering down,

But, ere it touched a foot that might have danced

The greensward into greener circles, dipt,

And mixed with shadows of the common ground!

But the full day dwelt on her brows, and sunned

Her violet eyes, and all her Hebe-bloom,

And doubled his own warmth against her lips,

And on the bounteous wave of such a breast

As never pencil drew. Half light, half shade,

She stood, a sight to make an old man young.

So rapt, we neared the house; but she, a Rose

In roses, mingled with her fragrant toil,

Nor heard us come, nor from her tendance turned

Into the world without; till close at hand,

And almost ere I knew mine own intent,

This murmur broke the stillness of that air

Which brooded round about her:

"Ah, one rose,

One rose, but one, by those fair fingers culled,

Were worth a hundred kisses pressed on lips

Less exquisite than thine!"

She looked: but all

Suffused with blushes—neither self-possessed

Nor startled, but betwixt this mood and that,

Divided in a graceful quiet—paused,

And dropt the branch she held, and turning, wound

Her looser hair in braid, and stirred her lips  
 For some sweet answer, though no answer came ;  
 Nor yet refused the rose, but granted it,  
 And moved away, and left me, statue-like,  
 In act to render thanks.

I, that whole day,  
 Saw her no more, although I lingered there  
 Till every daisy slept, and Love's white star  
 Beamed through the thickened cedar in the dusk.

So home we went, and all the livelong way  
 With solemn gibe did Eustace banter me.  
 "Now," said he, "will you climb the top of Art.  
 You cannot fail but work in hues to dim  
 The Titianic Flora. Will you match  
 My Juliet ? you, not you,—the Master, Love,  
 A more ideal Artist he than all."

So home I went, but could not sleep for joy,  
 Reading her perfect features in the gloom,  
 Kissing the rose she gave me o'er and o'er,  
 And shaping faithful record of the glance  
 That graced the giving—such a noise of life  
 Swarmed in the golden present, such a voice  
 Called to me from the years to come, and such  
 A length of bright horizon rimmed the dark.  
 And all that night I heard the watchmen peal  
 The sliding season : all that night I heard  
 The heavy clocks knolling the drowsy hours.  
 The drowsy hours, dispensers of all good,  
 O'er the mute city stole with folded wings,  
 Distilling odors on me as they went  
 To greet their fairer sisters of the East.

Love at first sight, first-born and heir to all,  
 Made this night thus. Henceforward squall nor  
 storm

Could keep me from that Eden where she dwelt.  
 Light pretexts drew me : sometimes a Dutch love  
 For tulips ; then for roses, moss or musk,  
 To grace my city-rooms ; or fruits and cream  
 Served in the weeping elm ; and more and more

A word could bring the color to my cheek ;  
A thought would fill my eyes with happy dew ;  
Love trebled life within me, and with each  
The year increased.

The daughters of the year,  
One after one, through that still garden passed :  
Each garlanded with her peculiar flower  
Danced into light, and died into the shade ;  
And each in passing touched with some new  
grace

Or seemed to touch her, so that day by day,  
Like one that never can be wholly known,  
Her beauty grew ; till Autumn brought an hour  
For Eustace, when I heard his deep " I will,"  
Breathed, like the covenant of a God, to hold  
From thence through all the worlds : but I rose up  
Full of his bliss, and following her dark eyes,  
Felt earth as air beneath me, till I reached  
The wicket-gate, and found her standing there.

There sat we down upon a garden mound,  
Two mutually enfolded ; Love, the third,  
Between us, in the circle of his arms  
Enwound us both ; and over many a range  
Of waning lime the gray cathedral towers,  
Across a hazy glimmer of the west,  
Revealed their shining windows : from them clashed  
The bells ; we listened ; with the time we played ;  
We spoke of other things ; we coursed about  
The subject most at heart, more near and near,  
Like doves about a dovecote, wheeling round  
The central wish, until we settled there.

Then, in that time and place, I spoke to her,  
Requiring, though I knew it was mine own,  
Yet for the pleasure that I took to hear,  
Requiring at her hand the greatest gift,  
A woman's heart, the heart of her I loved ;  
And in that time and place she answered me,  
And in the compass of three little words,  
More musical than ever came in one,

The silver fragments of a broken voice,  
Made me most happy, faltering "I am thine!"

Shall I cease here? Is this enough to say  
That my desire, like all strongest hopes,  
By its own energy fulfilled itself,  
Merged in completion? Would you learn at full  
How passion rose through circumstantial grades  
Beyond all grades developed? and indeed  
I had not stayed so long to tell you all,  
But while I mused came Memory with sad eyes,  
Holding the folded annals of my youth;  
And while I mused, Love with knit brows went by,  
And with a flying finger swept my lips,  
And spake, "Be wise: not easily forgiven  
Are those, who setting wide the doors, that bar  
The secret bridal chambers of the heart,  
Let in the day." Here, then, my words have end.

Yet might I tell of meetings, of farewells—  
Of that which came between, more sweet than each,  
In whispers, like the whispers of the leaves  
That tremble round a nightingale—in sighs  
Which perfect Joy, perplexed for utterance,  
Stole from her sister Sorrow. Might I not tell  
Of difference, reconciliation, pledges given,  
And vows, where there was never need of vows,  
And kisses, where the heart on one wild leap  
Hung tranced from all pulsation, as above  
The heavens between their fairy fleeces pale  
Sowed all their mystic gulfs with fleeting stars;  
Or while the balmy glooming, crescent-lit,  
Spread the light haze along the river-shores,  
And in the hollows; or as once we met  
Unheedful, though beneath a whispering rain  
Night slid down one long stream of sighing wind,  
And in her bosom bore the baby, Sleep.

But this whole hour your eyes have been intent  
On that veiled picture—veiled, for what it holds  
May not be dwelt on by the common day.  
This prelude has prepared thee. Raise thy soul,



Make thine heart ready with thine eyes : the time  
Is come to raise the veil.

Behold her there,  
As I beheld her ere she knew my heart,  
My first, last love ; the idol of my youth,  
The darling of my manhood, and, alas !  
Now the most blessed memory of mine age.

### D O R A .

WITH farmer Allan at the farm abode  
William and Dora. William was his son,  
And she his niece. He often looked at them,  
And often thought " I'll make them man and wife."  
Now Dora felt her uncle's will in all,  
And yearned towards William ; but the youth, be-  
cause

He had been always with her in the house,  
Thought not of Dora.

Then there came a day  
When Allan called his son, and said : " My son,  
I married late, but I would wish to see  
My grandchild on my knees before I die :  
And I have set my heart upon a match.  
Now therefore look to Dora ; she is well  
To look to ; thrifty too beyond her age.  
She is my brother's daughter : he and I  
Had once hard words, and parted, and he died  
In foreign lands ; but for his sake I bred  
His daughter Dora : take her for your wife ;  
For I have wished this marriage, night and day,  
For many years." But William answered short ;  
" I cannot marry Dora ; by my life,  
I will not marry Dora." Then the old man  
Was wroth, and doubled up his hands, and said :  
" You will not, boy ! you dare to answer thus !  
But in my time a father's word was law,

And so it shall be now for me. Look to't ;  
Consider, William : take a month to think,  
And let me have an answer to my wish ;  
Or, by the Lord that made me, you shall pack,  
And nevermore darken my doors again ! ”  
But William answered madly ; bit his lips,  
And broke away. The more he looked at her  
The less he liked her ; and his ways were harsh ;  
But Dora bore them meekly. Then before  
The month was out he left his father's house,  
And hired himself to work within the fields ;  
And half in love, half spite, he wooed and wed  
A laborer's daughter, Mary Morrison.

Then, when the bells were ringing, Allan called  
His niece and said : “ My girl, I love you well ;  
But if you speak with him that was my son,  
Or change a word with her he calls his wife,  
My home is none of yours. My will is law.”  
And Dora promised, being meek. She thought,  
“ It cannot be : my uncle's mind will change ! ”

And days went on, and there was born a boy  
To William ; then distresses came on him ;  
And day by day he passed his father's gate,  
Heart-broken, and his father helped him not.  
But Dora stored what little she could save,  
And sent it them by stealth, nor did they know  
Who sent it ; till at last a fever seized  
On William, and in harvest-time he died.

Then Dora went to Mary. Mary sat  
And looked with tears upon her boy, and thought  
Hard things of Dora. Dora came and said :  
“ I have obeyed my uncle until now,  
And I have sinned, for it was all through me  
This evil came on William at the first.  
But, Mary, for the sake of him that's gone,  
And for your sake, the woman that he chose,  
And for this orphan, I am come to you :  
You know there has not been for these five years  
So full a harvest : let me take the boy,

And I will set him in my uncle's eye  
Among the wheat ; that when his heart is glad  
Of the full harvest, he may see the boy,  
And bless him for the sake of him that's gone."

And Dora took the child, and went her way  
Across the wheat, and sat upon a mound  
That was unsown, where many poppies grew.  
Far off the farmer came into the field  
And spied her not ; for none of all his men  
Dare tell him Dora waited with the child ;  
And Dora would have risen and gone to him,  
But her heart failed her ; and the reapers reaped,  
And the sun fell, and all the land was dark.

But when the morrow came, she rose and took  
The child once more, and sat upon the mound ;  
And made a little wreath of all the flowers  
That grew about, and tied it round his hat  
To make him pleasing in her uncle's eye.  
Then when the farmer passed into the field  
He spied her, and he left his men at work,  
And came and said : "Where were you yesterday ?  
Whose child is that ? What are you doing here ?"  
So Dora cast her eyes upon the ground,  
And answered softly : "This is William's child !"  
"And did I not," said Allan, "did I not  
Forbid you, Dora ?" Dora said again :  
"Do with me as you will, but take the child  
And bless him for the sake of him that's gone !"  
And Allan said : "I see it is a trick  
Got up betwixt you and the woman there.  
I must be taught my duty, and by you !  
You knew my word was law, and yet you dared  
To slight it. Well—for I will take the boy ;  
But go you hence, and never see me more."

So saying, he took the boy, that cried aloud  
And struggled hard. The wreath of flowers fell  
At Dora's feet. She bowed upon her hands,  
And the boy's cry came to her from the field,  
More and more distant. She bowed down her head,

Remembering the day when first she came,  
And all the things that had been. She bowed down  
And wept in secret ; and the reapers reaped,  
And the sun fell, and all the land was dark.

Then Dora went to Mary's house, and stood  
Upon the threshold. Mary saw the boy  
Was not with Dora. She broke out in praise  
To God, that helped her in her widowhood.  
And Dora said : " My uncle took the boy ;  
But, Mary, let me live and work with you :  
He says that he will never see me more."  
Then answered Mary : " This shall never be,  
That thou shouldst take my trouble on thyself :  
And, now I think, he shall not have the boy,  
For he will teach him hardness, and to slight  
His mother ; therefore thou and I will go,  
And I will have my boy, and bring him home ;  
And I will beg of him to take thee back ;  
But if he will not take thee back again,  
Then thou and I will live within one house,  
And work for William's child, until he grows  
Of age to help us."

So the women kissed  
Each other, and set out and reached the farm.  
The door was off the latch ; they peeped and saw  
The boy set up betwixt his grandsire's knees,  
Who thrust him in the hollows of his arm,  
And clapt him on the hands and on the cheeks,  
Like one that loved him : and the lad stretched out  
And babbled for the golden seal, that hung  
From Allan's watch, and sparkled by the fire.  
Then they came in ; but when the boy beheld  
His mother, he cried out to come to her :  
And Allan sat him down, and Mary said :

" O Father !—if you let me call you so—  
I never came a-begging for myself,  
Or William, or this child ; but now I come  
For Dora : take her back ; she loves you well.  
O Sir, when William died, he died at peace

With all men ; for I asked him, and he said,  
 He could not ever rue his marrying me.—  
 I had been a patient wife : but, Sir, he said  
 That he was wrong to cross his father thus :  
 ‘ God bless him ! ’ he said, ‘ and may he never know  
 The troubles I have gone through ! ’ Then he turned  
 His face and passed—unhappy that I am !  
 But now, Sir, let me have my boy, for you  
 Will make him hard, and he will learn to slight  
 His father’s memory ; and take Dora back,  
 And let all this be as it was before.”

So Mary said, and Dora hid her face  
 By Mary. There was silence in the room ;  
 And all at once the old man burst in sobs :—  
 “ I have been to blame—to blame ! I have killed  
     my son !  
 I have killed him—but I loved him—my dear son !  
 May God forgive me !—I have been to blame.  
 Kiss me, my children ! ”

Then they clung about  
 The old man’s neck, and kissed him many times.  
 And all the man was broken with remorse ;  
 And all his love came back a hundred fold ;  
 And for three hours he sobbed o’er William’s child,  
 Thinking of William.

So those four abode  
 Within one house together ; and as years  
 Went forward, Mary took another mate ;  
 But Dora lived unmarried till her death.

## AUDLEY COURT.

“ THE Bull, the Fleece are crammed, and not a  
     room  
 For love or money. Let us picnic there  
 At Audley Court.”

I spoke, while Audley feast

Hummed like a hive all round the narrow quay,  
To Francis, with a basket on his arm,  
To Francis just alighted from the boat,  
And breathing of the sea. "With all my heart,"  
Said Francis. Then we shouldered through the  
swarm

And rounded by the stillness of the beach  
To where the bay runs up its latest horn.

We left the dying ebb that faintly lipped  
The flat red granite; so by many a sweep  
Of meadow smooth from aftermath we reached  
The griffin-guarded gates, and passed through all  
The pillared dusk of sounding sycamores,  
And crossed the garden to the gardener's lodge,  
With all its casements bedded, and its walls  
And chimneys muffled in the leafy vine.

There, on a slope of orchard, Francis laid  
A damask napkin wrought with horse and hound,  
Brought out a dusky loaf that smelt of home,  
And, half-cut-down, a pasty costly-made,  
Where quail and pigeon, lark and leveret lay,  
Like fossils of the rock, with golden yolks  
Imbedded and injellied; last, with these,  
A flask of cider from his father's vats,  
Prime, which I knew; and so we sat and eat  
And talked old matters over: who was dead,  
Who married, who was like to be, and how  
The races went, and who would rent the hall:  
Then touched upon the game, how scarce it was  
This season: glancing thence, discussed the farm,  
The fourfield system and the price of grain;  
And struck upon the corn-laws, where we split,  
And came again together on the king  
With heated faces; till he laughed aloud;  
And, while the blackbird on the pippin hung  
To hear him, clapt his hand in mine and sang—

"O! who would fight and march and counter-  
march,

Be shot for sixpence in a battle-field,

And shovelled up into a bloody trench  
Where no one knows? but let me live my life.

“O! who would cast and balance at a desk,  
Perched like a crow upon a three-legged stool,  
Till all his juice is dried, and all his joints  
Are full of chalk? but let me live my life.

“Who’d serve the state? for if I carved my name  
Upon the cliffs that guard my native land,  
I might as well have traced it in the sands;  
The sea wastes all: but let me live my life.

“O! who would love? I wooed a woman once,  
But she was sharper than an eastern wind,  
And all my heart turned from her, as a thorn  
Turns from the sea: but let me live my life.”

He sang his song, and I replied with mine:  
I found it in a volume, all of songs,  
Knocked down to me, when old Sir Robert’s pride,  
His books—the more the pity, so I said—  
Came to the hammer here in March—and this—  
I set the words, and added names I knew.

“Sleep, Ellen Aubrey, sleep, and dream of me:  
Sleep, Ellen, folded in thy sister’s arm,  
And sleeping, haply dream her arm is mine.

“Sleep, Ellen, folded in Emilia’s arm;  
Emilia, fairer than all else but thou,  
For thou art fairer than all else that is.

“Sleep, breathing health and peace upon her  
breast:

Sleep, breathing love and trust against her lip:  
I go to-night: I come to-morrow morn.

“I go, but I return: I would I were  
The pilot of the darkness and the dream.  
Sleep, Ellen Aubrey, love, and dream of me.”

So sang we each to either, Francis Hale,  
The farmer’s son who lived across the bay,  
My friend; and I, that having wherewithal,  
And in the fallow leisure of my life  
A rolling stone of here and everywhere,  
Did what I would; but ere the night we rose  
And sauntered home beneath a moon, that, just

In crescent, dimly rained about the leaf  
 Twilights of airy silver, till we reached  
 The limit of the hills; and as we sank  
 From rock to rock upon the glooming quay,  
 The town was hushed beneath us: lower down  
 The bay was oily calm; the harbor-buoy  
 With one green sparkle ever and anon  
 Dipt by itself, and we were glad at heart.

## WALKING TO THE MAIL.

*John.* I'm glad I walked. How fresh the meadows  
 look  
 Above the river, and, but a month ago,  
 The whole hill-side was redder than a fox.  
 Is yon plantation where this by-way joins  
 The turnpike?

*James.* Yes.

*John.* And when does this come by?

*James.* The mail? At one o'clock.

*John.* What is it now?

*James.* A quarter to.

*John.* Whose house is that I see  
 Beyond the watermills?

*James.* Sir Edward Head's:  
 But he's abroad: the place is to be sold.

*John.* O, his. He was not broken.

*James.* No sir, he,  
 Vexed with a morbid devil in his blood  
 That veiled the world with jaundice, hid his face  
 From all men, and commercing with himself,  
 He lost the sense that handles daily life—  
 That keeps us all in order more or less—  
 And sick of home, went overseas for change.

*John.* And whither?

*James.* Nay, who knows? he's here and  
 there.



But let him go ; his devil goes with him,  
As well as with his tenant, Jocky Dawes.

*John.* What's that ?

*James.* You saw the man—on Monday, was it ?  
There by the humpbacked willow ; half stands up  
And bristles ; half has fallen and made a bridge ;  
And there he caught the younker tickling trout—  
Caught in *flagrante*—what's the Latin word ?—  
*Delicto* : but his house, for so they say,  
Was haunted with a jolly ghost, that shook  
The curtains, whined in lobbies, tapt at doors,  
And rumunaged like a rat : no servant stayed :  
The farmer vext packs up his beds and chairs,  
And all his household stuff ; and with his boy  
Betwixt his knees, his wife upon the tilt,  
Sets out, and meets a friend who hails him, " What !  
You're flitting !" " Yes, we're flitting," says the ghost,  
(For they had packed the thing among the beds.)  
" O well," says he, " you flitting with us too—  
Jack, turn the horses' heads and home again."

*John.* He left his wife behind ; for so I heard.

*James.* He left her, yes. I met my lady once :  
A woman like a butt, and harsh as crabs.

*John.* O yet but I remember, ten years back—  
'Tis now at least ten years—and then she was—  
You could not light upon a sweeter thing :  
A body slight and round, and like a pear  
In growing, modest eyes, a hand, a foot  
Lessening in perfect cadence, and a skin  
As clean and white as privet when it flowers.

*James.* Ay, ay, the blossom fades, and they that  
loved

At first like dove and dove were cat and dog.  
She was the daughter of a cottager,  
Out of her sphere. What betwixt shame and pride.  
New things and old, himself and her, she soured  
To what she is : a nature never kind !  
Like men, like manners : like breeds like, they say.  
Kind nature is the best : those manners next

That fit us like a nature second-hand ;  
Which are indeed the manners of the great.

*John.* But I had heard it was this bill that past,  
And fear of change at home, that drove him hence.

*James.* That was the last drop in the cup of gall.  
I once was near him when his bailiff brought  
A Chartist pike. You should have seen him wince  
As from a venomous thing : he thought himself  
A mark for all, and shuddered, lest a cry  
Should break his sleep by night, and his nice eyes  
Should see the raw mechanic's bloody thumbs  
Sweat on his blazoned chairs ; but, sir, you know  
That these two parties still divide the world—  
Of those that want, and those that have : and still  
The same old sore breaks out from age to age  
With much the same result. Now I myself,  
A Tory to the quick, was as a boy  
Destructive, when I had not what I would.  
I was at school—a college in the South :  
There lived a flayflint near ; we stole his fruit,  
His hens, his eggs ; but there was law for us ;  
We paid in person. He had a sow, sir. She,  
With meditative grunts of much content,  
Lay great with pig, wallowing in sun and mud.  
By night we dragged her to the college tower  
From her warm bed, and up the corkscrew stair  
With hand and rope we haled the groaning sow,  
And on the leads we kept her till she pigged.  
Large range of prospect had the mother sow,  
And but for daily loss of one she loved,  
As one by one we took them—but for this—  
As never sow was higher in this world—  
Might have been happy : but what lot is pure ?  
We took them all, till she was left alone  
Upon her tower, the Niobe of swine,  
And so returned unfarrowed to her sty.

*John.* They found you out ?

*James.* Not they.

*John.* Well—after all—

What know we of the secret of a man ?

His nerves were wrong. What ails us, who are  
sound,

That we should mimic this raw fool the world,  
Which charts us all in its coarse blacks or whites,  
As ruthless as a baby with a worm,  
As cruel as a schoolboy ere he grows  
To Pity—more from ignorance than will.

But put your best foot forward, or I fear  
That we shall miss the mail: and here it comes  
With five at top: as quaint a four-in-hand  
As you shall see—three pyebalds and a roan.

## ST. SIMEON STYLITES.

ALTHOUGH I be the basest of mankind,  
From scalp to sole one slough and crust of sin,  
Unfit for earth, unfit for heaven, scarce meet  
For troops of devils, mad with blasphemy,  
I will not cease to grasp the hope I hold  
Of saintdom, and to clamor, mourn and sob,  
Battering the gates of heaven with storms of prayer,  
Have mercy, Lord, and take away my sin.

Let this avail, just, dreadful, mighty God,  
This not be all in vain, that thrice ten years,  
Thrice multiplied by superhuman pangs,  
In hungers and in thirsts, fevers and cold,  
In coughs, aches, stitches, ulcerous throes and  
cramps,

A sign betwixt the meadow and the cloud,  
Patient on this tall pillar I have borne [snow;  
Rain, wind, frost, heat, hail, damp, and sleet, and  
And I had hoped that ere this period closed  
Thou wouldst have caught me up into thy rest,  
Denying not these weather-beaten limbs  
The meed of saints, the white robe and the palm.

O take the meaning, Lord: I do not breathe,  
Not whisper, any murmur of complaint.  
Pain heaped ten-hundred-fold to this, were still

Less burthen, by ten-hundred-fold, to bear,  
Than were those lead-like tons of sin, that crushed  
My spirif flat before thee.

O Lord, Lord,  
Thou knowest I bore this better at the first,  
For I was strong and hale of body then ;  
And though my teeth, which now are dropt away,  
Would chatter with the cold, and all my beard  
Was tagged with icy fringes in the moon,  
I drowned the whoopings of the owl with sound  
Of pious hymns and psalms, and sometimes saw  
An angel stand and watch me, as I sang.  
Now am I feeble grown : my end draws nigh—  
I hope my end draws nigh : half deaf I am,  
So that I scarce can hear the people hum  
About the column's base, and almost blind,  
And scarce can recognize the fields I know.  
And both my thighs are rotted with the dew,  
Yet cease I not to clamor and to cry,  
While my stiff spine can hold my weary head,  
Till all my limbs drop piecemeal from the stone,  
Have mercy, mercy : take away my sin.

O Jesus, if thou wilt not save my soul,  
Who may be saved ? who is it may be saved ?  
Who may be made a saint, if I fail here ?  
Show me the man hath suffered more than I.  
For did not all thy martyrs die one death ?  
For either they were stoned, or crucified,  
Or burned in fire, or boiled in oil, or sawn  
In twain beneath the ribs ; but I die here  
To-day, and whole years long, a life of death.  
Bear witness, if I could have found a way  
(And heedfully I sifted all my thought)  
More slowly-painful to subdue this home  
Of sin, my flesh, which I despise and hate,  
I had not stinted practice, oh my God !

For not alone this pillar-punishment,  
Not this alone I bore : but while I lived  
In the white convent down the valley there,

For many weeks about my loins I wore  
The rope that haled the buckets from the well,  
Twisted as tight as I could knot the noose ;  
And spake not of it to a single soul,  
Until the ulcer, eating through my skin,  
Betrayed my secret penance, so that all  
My brethren marvelled greatly. More than this  
I bore, whereof, oh God, thou knowest all.

Three winters, that my soul might grow to thee,  
I lived up there on yonder mountain side.  
My right leg chained into the crag, I lay  
Pent in a roofless close of ragged stones ;  
Inswathed sometimes in wandering mist, and twice  
Blackened with thy branding thunder, and sometimes  
Sucking the damps for drink, and eating not,  
Except the spare chance-gift of those that came  
To touch my body and be healed, and live :  
And they say then that I worked miracles,  
Whereof my fame is loud amongst mankind,  
Cured lameness, palsies, cancers. Thou, oh God,  
Knowest alone whether this was or no.  
Have mercy, mercy ; cover all my sin !

Then, that I might be more alone with thee,  
Three years I lived upon a pillar high  
Six cubits, and three years on one of twelve ;  
And twice three years I crouched on one that rose  
Twenty by measure ; last of all, I grew  
Twice ten long weary, weary years to this,  
That numbers forty cubits from the soil.

I think that I have borne as much as this—  
Or else I dream—and for so long a time,  
If I may measure time by yon slow light,  
And this high dial, which my sorrow crowns—  
So much—even so.

And yet I know not well,  
For that the evil ones come here, and say,  
“ Fall down, oh Simeon : thou hast suffered long  
For ages and for ages ! ” Then they prate  
Of penances I cannot have gone through,

Perplexing me with lies ; and oft I fall,  
Maybe for months, in such blind lethargies,  
That Heaven, and Earth, and Time are choked.

But yet

Bethink thee, Lord, while thou and all the saints  
Enjoy themselves in heaven, and men on earth  
House in the shade of comfortable roofs,  
Sit with their wives by fires, eat wholesome food,  
And wear warm clothes, and even beasts have stalls,  
I, 'tween the spring and downfall of the light,  
Bow down one thousand and two hundred times,  
To Christ, the Virgin Mother, and the Saints ;  
Or in the night, after a little sleep,  
I wake : the chill stars sparkle ; I am wet  
With drenching dews, or stiff with crackling frost.  
I wear an undressed goatskin on my back ;  
A grazing iron collar grinds my neck ;  
And in my weak, lean arms I lift the cross,  
And strive and wrestle with thee till I die :  
O mercy, mercy ! wash away my sin !

O Lord, thou knowest what a man I am ;  
A sinful man, conceived and born in sin ;  
'Tis their own doing ; this is none of mine ;  
Lay it not to me. Am I to blame for this,  
That here come those that worship me ? Ha ! ha !  
They think that I am somewhat. What am I ?  
The silly people take me for a saint,  
And bring me offerings of fruit and flowers ;  
And I, in truth (thou wilt bear witness here)  
Have all in all endured as much, and more  
Than many just and holy men, whose names  
Are registered and calendered for saints.

Good people, you do ill to kneel to me.  
What is it I can have done to merit this ?  
I am a sinner viler than you all.  
It may be I have wrought some miracles,  
And cured some halt and maimed ; but what of that ?  
It may be, no one, even among the saints,  
May match his pains with mine ; but what of that ?

Yet do not rise : for you may look on me,  
 And in your looking you may kneel to God.  
 Speak ! is there any of you halt or maimed ?  
 I think you know I have some power with Heaven  
 From my long penance : let him speak his wish.

Yes, I can heal him. Power goes forth from me.  
 They say that they are healed. Ah, hark ! they  
 shout

“ St. Simeon Stylites.” Why, if so,  
 God reaps a harvest in me. O my soul,  
 God reaps a harvest in thee. If this be,  
 Can I work miracles and not be saved ?  
 This is not told of any. They were saints.  
 It cannot be but that I shall be saved ;  
 Yea, crowned a saint. They shout, “ Behold a  
 saint ! ”

And lower voices saint me from above.  
 Courage, St. Simeon ! This dull chrysalis  
 Cracks into shining wings, and hope ere death  
 Spreads more and more and more, that God hath  
 now

Sponged and made blank of crimeful record all  
 My mortal archives.

O my sons, my sons,  
 I, Simeon of the pillar, by surname  
 Stylites, among men ; I, Simeon,  
 The watcher on the column till the end ;  
 I, Simeon, whose brain the sunshine bakes ;  
 I, whose bald brows in silent hours become  
 Unnaturally hoar with rime, do now  
 From my high nest of penance here proclaim  
 That Pontius and Iscariot by my side  
 Showed like fair seraphs. On the coals I lay,  
 A vessel full of sin : all hell beneath  
 Made me boil over. Devils plucked my sleeve ;  
 Abaddon and Asmodeus caught at me.  
 I smote them with the cross ; they swarmed again.  
 In bed like monstrous apes they crushed my chest.  
 They flapped my light out as I read : I saw

Their faces grow between me and my book :  
 With colt-like whinny and with hoggish whine  
 They burst my prayer. Yet this way was left,  
 And by this way I 'scaped them. Mortify  
 Your flesh, like me, with scourges and with thorns ;  
 Smite, shrink not, spare not. If it may be, fast  
 Whole Lents, and pray. I hardly, with slow steps—  
 With slow, faint steps, and much exceeding pain—  
 Have scrambled past those pits of fire, that still  
 Sing in mine ears. But yield not me the praise :  
 God only through his bounty hath thought fit,  
 Among the powers and princes of this world,  
 To make me an example to mankind,  
 Which few can reach to. Yet I do not say  
 But that a time may come—yea, even now,  
 Now, now, his footsteps smite the threshold stairs  
 Of life—I say, that time is at the doors  
 When you may worship me without reproach ;  
 For I will leave my relics in your land,  
 And you may carve a shrine about my dust,  
 And burn a fragrant lamp before my bones,  
 When I am gathered to the glorious saints.

While I spake then, a sting of shrewdest pain  
 Ran shrivelling through me, and a cloudlike change,  
 In passing, with a grosser film made thick  
 These heavy, horny eyes. The end ! the end !  
 Surely the end ! What's here ? a shape, a shade,  
 A flash of light. Is that the angel there  
 That holds a crown ? Come, blessed brother, come.  
 I know thy glittering face. I waited long ;  
 My brows are ready. What ! deny it now ?  
 Nay, draw, draw, draw nigh. So I clutch it. Christ !  
 'T is gone : 'tis here again ; the crown ! the crown !  
 So now 'tis fitted on and grows to me,  
 And from it melt the dews of Paradise,  
 Sweet ! sweet ! spikenard, and balm, and frankin-  
 cense.

Ah ! let me not be fooled, sweet saints : I trust  
 That I am whole, and clean, and meet for Heaven.



Speak, if there be a priest, a man of God,  
 Among you there, and let him presently  
 Approach, and lean a ladder on the shaft,  
 And climbing up into my airy home,  
 Deliver me the blessed sacrament ;  
 For by the warning of the Holy Ghost,  
 I prophesy that I shall die to-night,  
 A quarter before twelve.

But thou, oh Lord,

Aid all this foolish people ; let them take  
 Example, pattern : lead them to thy light.

### THE SEA-FAIRIES.

SLOW sailed the weary mariners, and saw,  
 Betwixt the green brink and the running foam,  
 Sweet faces, rounded arms, and bosoms prest  
 To little harps of gold ; and, while they mused,  
 Whispering to each other half in fear,  
 Shrill music reached them on the middle sea.

Whither away, whither away, whither away ? fly  
 no more.

Whither away from the high green field, and the  
 happy blossoming shore ?

Day and night to the billow the fountain calls ;  
 Down shower the gambolling waterfalls  
 From wandering over the lea :  
 Out of the live-green heart of the dells  
 They freshen the silvery-crimson shells,  
 And thick with white bells the clover-hill swells  
 High over the full-toned sea :

O hither, come hither, and furl your sails,  
 Come hither to me and to me !

Hither, come hither, and frolic and play ;

Here it is only the mew that wails ;

We will sing to you all the day :

Mariner, mariner, furl your sails,  
 For here are the blissful downs and dales,  
 And merrily, merrily carol the gales,  
 And the spangle dances in bight and bay,  
 And the rainbow forms and flies on the land  
 Over the islands free ;  
 And the rainbow lives in the curve of the sand ;  
 Hither, come hither and see ;  
 And the rainbow hangs on the poisoning wave,  
 And sweet is the color of cove and cave,  
 And sweet shall your welcome be ;  
 O hither, come hither, and be our lords,  
 For merry brides are we !  
 We will kiss sweet kisses, and speak sweet words :  
 O listen, listen, your eyes shall glisten  
 With pleasure and love and jubilee !  
 O listen, listen, your eyes shall glisten  
 When the sharp, clear twang of the golden chords  
 Runs up the ridgéd sea !  
 Who can light on as happy a shore  
 All the world o'er, all the world o'er ?  
 Whither away ? listen and stay : mariner, mariner  
 fly no more.

## THE DESERTED HOUSE.

## I.

LIFE and Thought have gone away  
 Side by side,  
 Leaving door and windows wide :  
 Careless tenants they !

## II.

All within is dark as night :  
 In the windows is no light ;  
 And no murmur at the door,  
 So frequent on its hinge before.

## III.

Close the door, the shutters close,  
Or through the windows we shall see  
The nakedness and vacancy  
Of the dark, deserted house.

## IV.

Come away ; no more of mirth  
Is here or merry-making sound.  
The house was builded of the earth,  
And shall fall again to ground.

## V.

Come away ; for Life and Thought  
Here no longer dwell ;  
But in a city glorious—  
A great and distant city—have bought  
A mansion incorruptible.  
Would they could have stayed with us.

## EDWIN MORRIS ;

## OR, THE LAKE.

O ME, my pleasant rambles by the lake,  
My sweet, wild, fresh three quarters of a year,  
My one Oasis in the dust and drouth  
Of city life ! I was a sketcher then ;  
See here, my doing : curves of mountain, bridge,  
Boat, island, ruins of a castle, built  
When men knew how to build, upon a rock,  
With turrets lichen-gilded like a rock ;  
And here, new-comers in an ancient hold,  
New-comers from the Mersey, millionaires,  
Here lived the Hills,—a Tudor-chimneyed bulk  
Of mellow brickwork on an isle of bowers.

O me ! my pleasant rambles by the lake  
With Edwin Morris and with Edward Bull,  
The curate ; he was fatter than his cure.

But Edwin Morris, he that knew the names,  
Long learned names of agaric, moss and fern,  
Who forged a thousand theories of the rocks,  
Who taught me how to skate, to row, to swim,  
Who read me rhymes elaborately good,  
His own,—I called him Crichton, for he seemed  
All-perfect, finished to the finger nail.

And once I asked him of his early life,  
And his first passion ; and he answered me ;  
And well his words became him : was he not  
A full-celled honeycomb of eloquence  
Stored from all flowers ? Poet-like he spoke :

“ My love for Nature is as old as I ;  
But thirty moons, one honeymoon to that,  
And three rich sennights more, my love for *her*.  
My love for Nature and my love for *her*,  
Of different ages, like twin-sisters grew,  
Twin-sisters differently beautiful.  
To some full music rose and sank the sun,  
And some full music seemed to move and *change*  
With all the varied changes of the dark,  
And either twilight and the day between ;  
For daily hope fulfilled, to rise again  
Revolving toward fulfilment, made it sweet  
To walk, to sit, to sleep, to wake, to breathe.”

Or this or something like to this he spoke.  
Then said the fat-faced curate, Edward Bull,  
“ I take it, God made the woman for the *man*,  
And for the good and increase of the world.  
A pretty face is well, and this is well,  
To have a dame indoors that trims us up,  
And keeps us tight ; but these unreal ways

Seem but the theme of writers, and, indeed,  
Worn threadbare. Man is made of solid stuff.  
I say, God made the woman for the man,  
And for the good and increase of the world."

"Parson," said I, "you pitch the pipe too low ;  
But I have sudden touches, and can run  
My faith beyond my practice into his ;  
Though if, in dancing after Letty Hill,  
I do not hear the bells upon my cap,  
I scarce hear other music ; yet say on.  
What should one give to light on such a dream ?"  
I asked him half-sardonically.

"Give ?  
Give all thou art," he answered, and a light  
Of laughter dimpled in his swarthy cheek ;  
"I would have hid her needle in my heart,  
To save her little finger from a scratch  
No deeper than the skin ; my ears could hear  
Her lightest breaths ; her least remark was worth  
The experience of the wise. I went and came ;  
Her voice fled always through the summer land ;  
I spoke her name alone. Thrice-happy days !  
The flower of each, those moments when we met,  
The crown of all, we met to part no more."

Were not his words delicious, I a beast  
To take them as I did ? but something jarred ;  
Whether he spoke too largely ; that there seemed  
A touch of something false, some self-conceit,  
Or over-smoothness ; howsoe'er it was,  
He scarcely hit my humor, and I said :—

"Friend Edwin, do not think yourself alone  
Of all men happy. Shall not Love to me,  
As in the Latin song I learnt at school,  
Sneeze out a full God-bless-you right and left ?  
But you can talk ; yours is a kindly vein ;

I have, I think,—Heaven knows,—as much within;  
 Have, or should have, but for a thought or two,  
 That, like a purple beech among the greens,  
 Looks out of place; 'tis from no want in her:  
 It is my shyness, or my self-distrust,  
 Or something of a wayward modern mind  
 Dissecting passion. Time will set me right."

So spoke I, knowing not the things that were.  
 Then said the fat-faced curate, Edward Bull:  
 "God made the woman for the use of man,  
 And for the good and increase of the world."  
 And I and Edwin laughed; and now we paused  
 About the windings of the marge to hear  
 The soft wind blowing over meadowy holms  
 And alders, garden-isles; and now we left  
 The clerk behind us, I and he, and ran  
 By ripply shallows of the lispig lake,  
 Delighted with the freshness and the sound.

But, when the bracken rusted on their crags,  
 My suit had withered, nipt to death by him  
 That was a God, and is a lawyer's clerk,  
 The rent-roll Cupid of our rainy isles.  
 'Tis true we met; one hour I had, no more,  
 She sent a note, the seal an *Elle vous suit*,  
 The close "Your Letty, only yours;" and this  
 Thrice underscored. The friendly mist of morn  
 Clung to the lake. I boated over, ran  
 My craft aground, and heard with beating heart  
 The Sweet-Gale rustle round the shelving keel;  
 And out I stepped, and up I crept; she moved,  
 Like Proserpine in Enna, gathering flowers;  
 Then low and sweet I whistled thrice; and she,  
 She turned, we closed, we kissed, swore faith, I  
     breathed

In some new planet; a silent cousin stole  
 Upon us and departed. "Leave," she cried,  
 "O leave me!" "Never, dearest, never; here

I brave the worst ;" and while we stood like fools  
 Embracing, all at once a score of pugs  
 And poodles yelled within, and out they came,  
 Trustees and aunts and uncles. "What, with him!"  
 "Go" (shrilled the cotton-spinning chorus), "him!"  
 I choked. Again they shrieked the burthen  
 "Him!"

Again with hands of wild rejection, "Go!—  
 Girl, get you in!" She went,—and in one month  
 They wedded her to sixty thousand pounds,  
 To lands in Kent and messuages in York,  
 And slight Sir Robert with his watery smile  
 And educated whisker. But for me,  
 They set an ancient creditor to work :  
 It seems I broke a close with force and arms ;  
 There came a mystic token from the king  
 To greet the sheriff, needless courtesy !  
 I read, and fled by night, and flying turned ;  
 Her taper glimmered in the lake below ;  
 I turned once more, close-buttoned to the storm ;  
 So left the place, left Edwin, nor have seen  
 Him since, nor heard of her, nor cared to hear.

Nor cared to hear ? perhaps ; yet long ago  
 I have pardoned little Letty ; not indeed,  
 It may be, for her own dear sake, but this,  
 She seems a part of those fresh days to me ;  
 For, in the dust and drouth of London life,  
 She moves among my visions of the lake,  
 While the prime swallow dips his wing, or then  
 While the gold-lily blows, and overhead  
 The light cloud smoulders on the summer crag.

## TO —,

AFTER READING A LIFE AND LETTERS.

“Cursed be he that moves my bones.”  
*Shakspeare's Epitaph.*

You might have won the Poet's name,  
 If such be worth the winning now,  
 And gained a laurel for your brow  
 Of sounder leaf than I can claim ;

But you have made the wiser choice,  
 A life that moves to gracious ends  
 Through troops of unrecording friends,  
 A deedful life, a silent voice ;

And you have missed the irreverent doom  
 Of those that wear the Poet's crown ;  
 Hereafter neither knave nor clown  
 Shall hold their orgies at your tomb.

For now the Poet cannot die,  
 Nor leave his music as of old,  
 But round him, ere he scarce be cold,  
 Begins the scandal and the cry ;

“Proclaim the faults he would not show ;  
 Break lock and seal ; betray the trust ;  
 Keep nothing sacred ; 'tis but just  
 The many-headed beast should know.”

Ah, shameless ! for he did but sing  
 A song that pleased us from its worth ;  
 No public life was his on earth,  
 No blazoned statesman he, nor king.



He gave the people of his best ;  
 His worst he kept, his best he gave.  
 My Shakspeare's curse on clown and knave  
 Who will not let his ashes rest !

Who make it seem more sweet to be  
 The little life of bank and brier,  
 The bird that pipes his lone desire  
 And dies unheard within his tree,

Than he that warbles long and loud  
 And drops at Glory's temple-gates,  
 For whom the carrion vulture waits  
 To tear his heart before the crowd !

TO E. L., ON HIS TRAVELS IN GREECE.

ILLYRIAN woodlands, echoing falls  
 Of water, sheets of summer glass,  
 The long divine Peneïan pass,  
 The vast Äkrokeraunian walls,

Tomohrit, Athos, all things fair,  
 With such a pencil, such a pen,  
 You shadow forth to distant men,  
 I read and felt that I was there :

And trust me while I turned the page,  
 And tracked you still on classic ground,  
 I grew in gladness till I found  
 My spirits in the golden age.

For me the torrent ever poured  
 And glistened,—here and there alone  
 The broad-limbed Gods at random thrown  
 By fountain-urns ;—and Naiads oared

A glimmering shoulder under gloom  
Of cavern pillars; on the swell  
The silver lily heaved and fell;  
And many a slope was rich in bloom,

From him that on the mountain lea  
By dancing rivulets fed his flocks,  
To him who sat upon the rocks,  
And fluted to the morning sea.

“COME NOT, WHEN I AM DEAD.”

COME not, when I am dead,  
To drop thy foolish tears upon my grave,  
To trample round my fallen head,  
And vex the unhappy dust thou would'st not save.  
There let the wind sweep and the plover cry;  
But thou, go by.

Child, if it were thine error or thy crime,  
I care no longer, being all unblest;  
Wed whom thou wilt, but I am sick of Time,  
And I desire to rest.  
Pass on, weak heart, and leave me where I lie:  
Go by, go by.

THE EAGLE.

A FRAGMENT.

HE clasps the crag with hookéd hands;  
Close to the sun in lonely lands,  
Ringed with the azure world, he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;  
He watches from his mountain walls,  
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

## THE TALKING OAK.

## I.

ONCE more the gate behind me falls ;  
Once more before my face  
I see the mouldered Abbey-walls,  
That stand within the chace.

## II.

Beyond the lodge the city lies,  
Beneath its drift of smoke ;  
And ah ! with what delighted eyes  
I turn to yonder oak !

## III.

For when my passion first began,  
Ere that which in me burned,  
The love that makes me thrice a man,  
Could hope itself returned ;

## IV.

To yonder oak within the field  
I spoke without restraint,  
And with a larger faith appealed  
Than Papist unto Saint.

## V.

For oft I talked with him apart,  
And told him of my choice,  
Until he plagiarized a heart,  
And answered with a voice.

## VI.

Though what he whispered under Heaven  
None else could understand ;  
I found him garrulously given,  
A babbler in the land.

## VII.

But since I heard him make reply  
Is many a weary hour ;  
’Twere well to question him, and try  
If yet he keeps the power.

## VIII.

Hail, hidden to the knees in fern,  
Broad oak of Sumner-chace,  
Whose topmost branches can discern  
The roofs of Sumner-place !

## IX.

Say thou, whereon I carved her name,  
If ever maid or spouse,  
As fair as my Olivia, came  
To rest beneath thy boughs ?—

## X.

“ O Walter, I have sheltered here  
Whatever maiden grace  
The good old Summers, year by year,  
Made ripe in Sumner-chace :

## XI.

“ Old Summers, when the monk was fat,  
And, issuing shorn and sleek,  
Would twist his girdle tight, and pat  
The girls upon the cheek,

## XII.

“ Ere yet, in scorn of Peter’s-pence,  
And numbered bead, and shrift,  
Bluff Harry broke into the spence,  
And turned the cowls adrift :

## XIII.

“ And I have seen some score of those  
Fresh faces, that would thrive

When his man-minded offset rose  
To chase the deer at five ;

## XIV.

“ And all that from the town would stroll,  
Till that wild wind made work,  
In which the gloomy brewer's soul  
Went by me, like a stork :

## XV.

“ The slight she-slips of loyal blood,  
And others, passing praise,  
Strait-laced, but all-too-full in bud  
For puritanic stays :

## XVI.

“ And I have shadowed many a group  
Of beauties, that were born  
In teacup-times of hood and hoop,  
Or while the patch was worn ;

## XVII.

“ And, leg and arm with love-knots gay,  
About me leaped and laughed  
The modish Cupid of the day,  
And shrilled his tinsel shaft.

## XVIII.

“ I swear (and else may insects prick  
Each leaf into a gall)  
This girl, for whom your heart is sick,  
Is three times worth them all ;

## XIX.

“ For those and theirs, by Nature's law,  
Have faded long ago ;  
But in these latter springs I saw  
Your own Olivia blow,

## XX.

“From when she gambolled on the greens,  
A baby-germ, to when  
The maiden blossoms of her teens  
Could number five from ten.

## XXI.

“I swear, by leaf, and wind, and rain,  
(And hear me with thine ears,)  
That, though I circle in the grain  
Five hundred rings of years—

## XXII.

“Yet, since I first could cast a shade,  
Did never creature pass  
So slightly, musically made,  
So light upon the grass :

## XXIII.

“For as to fairies, that will flit  
To make the greensward fresh,  
I hold them exquisitely knit,  
But far too spare of flesh.”

## XXIV.

O, hide thy knotted knees in fern,  
And overlook the chace ;  
And from thy topmost branch discern  
The roofs of Sumner-place.

## XXV.

But thou, whereon I carved her name,  
That oft hast heard my vows,  
Declare when last Olivia came  
To sport beneath thy boughs.

## XXVI.

“O yesterday, you know, the fair  
Was holden at the town ;

Her father left his good arm-chair,  
And rode his hunter down.

## XXVII.

“And with him Albert came on his.  
I looked at him with joy :  
As cowslip unto oxlip is,  
So seems she to the boy.

## XXVIII.

An hour had past—and, sitting straight  
Within the low-wheeled chaise,  
Her mother trundled to the gate  
Behind the dappled grays.

## XXIX.

“But, as for her, she stayed at home,  
And on the roof she went,  
And down the way you use to come  
She looked with discontent.

## XXX.

“She left the novel half-uncut  
Upon the rosewood shelf ;  
She left the new piano shut :  
She could not please herself.

## XXXI.

“Then ran she, gamesome as the colt,  
And livelier than a lark  
She sent her voice through all the holt  
Before her, and the park.

## XXXII.

“A light wind chased her on the wing,  
And in the chase grew wild,  
As close as might be would he cling  
About the darling child:

## XXXIII.

"But light as any wind that blows  
So fleetly did she stir,  
The flower, she touched on, dipt and rose,  
And turned to look at her.

## XXXIV.

"And here she came, and round me played,  
And sang to me the whole  
Of those three stanzas that you made  
About my 'giant bole;'

## XXXV.

"And in a fit of frolic mirth  
She strove to span my waist:  
Alas, I was so broad of girth,  
I could not be embraced.

## XXXVI.

"I wished myself the fair young beech  
That here beside me stands,  
That round me, clasping each in each,  
She might have locked her hands.

## XXXVII.

"Yet seemed the pressure thrice as sweet  
As woodbine's fragile hold,  
Or when I feel about my feet  
The berried briony fold."

## XXXVIII.

O muffle round thy knees with fern,  
And shadow Summer-chace!  
Long may thy topmost branch discern  
The roofs of Summer-place!

## XXXIX.

But tell me, did she read the name  
I carved with many vows,



When last with throbbing heart I came  
To rest beneath thy boughs ?

## XL.

“ O yes, she wandered round and round  
These knotted knees of mine,  
And found, and kissed the name she found,  
And sweetly murmured thine.

## XLI.

“ A tear-drop trembled from its source,  
And down my surface crept.  
My sense of touch is something coarse,  
But I believe she wept.

## XLII.

“ Then flushed her cheek with rosy light,  
She glanced across the plain ;  
But not a creature was in sight :  
She kissed me once again.

## XLIII.

“ Her kisses were so close and kind,  
That, trust me on my word,  
Hard wood I am, and wrinkled rind,  
But yet my sap was stirred :

## XLIV. .

“ And even into my inmost ring  
A pleasure I discerned,  
Like those blind motions of the Spring,  
That show the year is turned.

## XLV.

“ Thrice-happy he that may caress  
The ringlet's waving balm—  
The cushions of whose touch may press  
The maiden's tender palm.

## XLVI.

"I, rooted here among the groves,  
But languidly adjust  
My vapid vegetable loves  
With anthers and with dust :

## XLVII.

"For ah ! my friend, the days were brief  
Whereof the poets talk,  
When that, which breathes within the leaf,  
Could slip its bark and walk.

## XLVIII.

"But could I, as in times foregone,  
From spray, and branch, and stem,  
Have sucked and gathered into one  
The life that spreads in them,

## XLIX.

"She had not found me so remiss ;  
But lightly issuing through,  
I would have paid her kiss for kiss  
With usury thereto."

## L.

O flourish high, with leafy towers,  
And overlook the lea,  
Pursue thy loves among the bowers,  
But leave thou mine to me.

## LI.

O flourish, hidden deep in fern,  
Old oak, I love thee well ;  
A thousand thanks for what I learn  
And what remains to tell.

## LII.

"'Tis little more : the day was warm ;  
At last, tired out with play,

She sank her head upon her arm,  
And at my feet she lay.

## LIII.

" Her eyelids dropped their silken eaves.  
I breathed upon her eyes  
Through all the summer of my leaves  
A welcome mixed with sighs.

## LIV.

" I took the swarming sound of life—  
The music from the town—  
The murmurs of the drum and fife,  
And lulled them in my own.

## LV.

" Sometimes I let a sunbeam slip,  
To light her shaded eye ;  
A second fluttered round her lip  
Like a golden butterfly ;

## LVI.

" A third would glimmer on her neck  
To make the necklace shine ;  
Another slid, a sunny fleck,  
From head to ankle fine.

## LVII.

" Then close and dark my arms I spread,  
And shadowed all her rest—  
Dropt dew upon her golden head,  
An acorn in her breast.

## LVIII.

" But in a pet she started up,  
And plucked it out, and drew  
My little oakling from the cup,  
And flung him in the dew.

## LIX.

“ And yet it was a graceful gift—  
I felt a pang within  
As when I see the woodman lift  
His axe to slay my kin.

## LX.

“ I shook him down because he was  
The finest on the tree.  
He lies beside thee on the grass.  
O kiss him once for me !

## LXI.

“ O kiss him twice and thrice for me,  
That have no lips to kiss,  
For never yet was oak on lea  
Shall grow so fair as this.”

## LXII.

Step deeper yet in herb and fern,  
Look further through the chace,  
Spread upward till thy boughs discern  
The front of Sumner-place.

## LXIII.

This fruit of thine by Love is blest,  
That but a moment lay  
Where fairer fruit of Love may rest  
Some happy future day.

## LXIV.

I kiss it twice, I kiss it thrice,  
The warmth it thence shall win  
To riper life may magnetize  
The baby-oak within.

## LXV.

But thou, while kingdoms overset,  
Or lapse from hand to hand,

Thy leaf shall never fail, nor yet  
Thine acorn in the land.

## LXVI.

May never saw dismember thee,  
Nor wielded axe disjoint ;  
That art the fairest spoken tree  
From here to Lizard-point.

## LXVII.

O rock upon thy towery top  
All throats that gurgle sweet !  
All starry culmination drop  
Balm-dews to bathe thy feet !

## LXVIII.

All grass of silky feather grow—  
And while he sinks or swells  
The full south-breeze around thee blow  
The sound of minster bells.

## LXIX.

The fat earth feed thy branchy root,  
That under deeply strikes !  
The northern morning o'er thee shoot,  
High up, in silver spikes !

## LXX.

Nor ever lightning char thy grain,  
But, rolling as in sleep,  
Low thunders bring the mellow rain,  
That makes thee broad and deep !

## LXXI.

And hear me swear a solemn oath,  
That only by thy side  
Will I to Olive plight my troth,  
And gain her for my bride.

LXXII.

And when my marriage-morn may fall,  
 She, Dryad-like, shall wear  
 Alternate leaf and acorn-ball  
 In wreath about her hair.

LXXIII.

And I will work in prose and rhyme,  
 And praise thee more in both  
 Than bard has honored beech or lime,  
 Or that Thessalian growth

LXXIV.

In which the swarthy ringdove sat,  
 And mystic sentence spoke ;  
 And more than England honors that,  
 Thy famous brother-oak,

LXXV.

Wherein the younger Charles abode  
 Till all the paths were dim,  
 And far below the Roundhead rode,  
 And hummed a surly hymn.

LOVE. AND DUTY.

OF love that never found his earthly close,  
 What sequel ? Streaming eyes and breaking hearts ?  
 Or all the same as if he had not been ?  
 Not so. Shall Error in the round of time  
 Still father Truth ? O, shall the braggart shout  
 For some blind glimpse of freedom work itself  
 Through madness, hated by the wise, to law  
 System and empire ? Sin itself be found  
 The cloudy porch oft opening on the Sun ?  
 And only he, this wonder, dead, become

Mere highway dust? or year by year alone  
Sit brooding in the ruins of a life,  
Nightmare of youth, the spectre of himself?

If this were thus, if this, indeed, were all,  
Better the narrow brain, the stony heart,  
The staring eye glazed o'er with sapless days,  
The long mechanic pacings to and fro,  
The set gray life, and apathetic end.  
But am I not the nobler through thy love?  
O three times less unworthy! likewise thou  
Art more through Love, and greater than thy years.  
The Sun will run his orbit, and the Moon  
Her circle. Wait, and Love himself will bring  
The drooping flower of knowledge changed to fruit  
Of wisdom. Wait: my faith is large in Time,  
And that which shapes it to some perfect end.

Will some one say, then why not ill for good?  
Why took ye not your pastime? To that man  
My work shall answer, since I knew the right  
And did it; for a man is not as God,  
But then most Godlike being most a man.

—So let me think 'tis well for thee and me—  
Ill-fated that I am, what lot is mine  
Whose foresight preaches peace, my heart so slow  
To feel it! For how hard it seemed to me,  
When eyes, love-languid through half-tears, would  
dwell

One earnest, earnest moment upon mine,  
Then not to dare to see! when thy low voice,  
Faltering, would break its syllables, to keep  
My own full-tuned,—hold passion in a leash,  
And not leap forth and fall about thy neck,  
And on thy bosom, (deep-desired relief!)  
Rain out the heavy mist of tears, that weighed  
Upon my brain, my senses and my soul!

For Love himself took part against himself  
To warn us off, and Duty loved of Love—  
O this world's curse—beloved but hated—came  
Like Death betwixt thy dear embrace and mine,

And crying, "Who is this? behold thy bride,"  
She pushed me from thee.

If the sense is hard  
To alien ears, I did not speak to these—  
No, not to thee, but to thyself in me:  
Hard is my doom and thine: thou knowest it all.

Could love part thus? was it not well to speak,  
To have spoken once? It could not but be well.  
The slow sweet hours that bring us all things good,  
The slow sad hours that bring us all things ill,  
And all good things from evil, brought the night  
In which we sat together and alone,  
And to the want, that hollowed all the heart,  
Gave utterance by the yearning of an eye,  
That burned upon its object through such tears  
As flow but once a life.

The trance gave way  
To those caresses, when a hundred times  
In that last kiss, which never was the last,  
Farewell, like endless welcome, lived and died.  
Then followed counsel, comfort, and the words  
That make a man feel strong in speaking truth;  
Till now the dark was worn, and overhead  
The lights of sunset and of sunrise mixed  
In that brief night; the summer night, that paused  
Among her stars to hear us; stars that hung  
Love-charmed to listen: all the wheels of Time  
Spun round in station, but the end had come.

O then like those, who clench their nerves to  
rush  
Upon their dissolution, we two rose,  
There—closing like an individual life—  
In one blind cry of passion and of pain,  
Like bitter accusation even to death,  
Caught up the whole of love and uttered it,  
And bade adieu forever.

Live—yet live—  
Shall sharpest pathos blight us, knowing all  
Life needs for life is possible to will—



Live happy ; tend thy flowers ; be tended by  
My blessing ! Should my Shadow cross thy thoughts  
Too sadly for thy peace, remand it thou  
For calmer hours to Memory's darkest hold,  
If not to be forgotten—not at once—  
Not all forgotten. Should it cross thy dreams,  
O might it come like one that looks content,  
With quiet eyes unfaithful to the truth,  
And point thee forward to a distant light,  
Or seem to lift a burthen from thy heart  
And leave thee freer, till thou wake refreshed,  
Then when the first low matin-chirp hath grown  
Full quire, and morning driven her plow of pearl  
Far furrowing into light the mounded rack,  
Beyond the fair green field and eastern sea.

### THE GOLDEN YEAR.

WELL, you shall have that song which Leonard  
It was last summer on a tour in Wales : [wrote :  
Old James was with me : we that day had been  
Up Snowdon ; and I wished for Leonard there,  
And found him in Llanberis : then we crost  
Between the lakes, and clambered half way up  
The counter side ; and that same song of his  
He told me ; for I bantered him, and swore  
They said he lived shut up within himself,  
A tongue-tied Poet in the feverous days,  
That, setting the *how much* before the *how*,  
Cry, like the daughters of the horse-leech, " Give,  
Cram us with all," but count not me the herd !

To which, " They call me what they will," he said :  
" But I was born too late : the fair new forms,  
That float about the threshold of an age,  
Like truths of Science waiting to be caught—  
Catch me who can, and make the catcher crowned—  
Are taken by the forelock. Let it be.

But if you care indeed to listen, hear  
These measured words, my work of yestermorn.

“We sleep and wake and sleep, but all things  
move ;

The Sun flies forward to his brother Sun ;  
The dark Earth follows wheeled in her ellipse :  
And human things returning on themselves  
Move onward, leading up the golden year.

“Ah, though the times when some new thought  
can bud

Are but as poets’ seasons when they flower,  
Yêt seas that daily gain upon the shore  
Have ebb and flow conditioning their march,  
And slow and sure comes up the golden year.

“When wealth no more shall rest in mounded  
heaps,

But smit with freer light shall slowly melt  
In many streams to fatten lower lands,  
And light shall spread, and man be liker man  
Through all the season of the golden year.

“Shall eagles not be eagles ? wrens be wrens ?  
If all the world were falcons, what of that ?  
The wonder of the eagle were the less,  
But he not less the eagle. Happy days  
Roll onward, leading up the golden year.

“Fly, happy, happy sails, and bear the Press ;  
Fly happy with the mission of the Cross ;  
Knit land to land, and blowing havenward.  
With silks, and fruits, and spices, clear of toll,  
Enrich the markets of the golden year.

“But we grow old. Ah ! when shall all men’s  
good

Be each man’s rule, and universal Peace  
Lie like a shaft of light across the land,  
And like a lane of beams athwart the sea,  
Through all the circle of the golden year ?”

Thus far he flowed, and ended ; whereupon  
“Ah, folly !” in mimic cadence answered James—  
“Ah, folly ! for it lies so far away,

Not in our time, nor in our children's time,  
'Tis like the second world to us that live,  
'Twere all as one to fix our hopes on Heaven  
As on this vision of the golden year."

With that he struck his staff against the rocks  
And broke it,—James,—you know him,—old, but  
full

Of force and choler, and firm upon his feet,  
And like an oaken stock in winter woods,  
O'erflourished with the hoary clematis:  
Then added, all in heat :

"What stuff is this?

Old writers pushed the happy season back,—  
The more fools they,—we forward : dreamers both :  
You most, that in an age, when every hour  
Must sweat her sixty minutes to the death,  
Live on, God love us, as if the seedsman, rapt  
Upon the teeming harvest, should not dip  
His hand into the bag : but well I know  
That unto him who works, and feels he works,  
This same grand year is ever at the doors."

He spoke ; and, high above, I heard them blast  
The steep slate-quarry, and the great echo flap  
And buffet round the hills from bluff to bluff.

## ULYSSES.

It little profits that an idle king,  
By this still hearth, among these barren crags,  
Matched with an aged wife, I mete and dole  
Unequal laws unto a savage race,  
That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me.  
I cannot rest from travel : I will drink  
Life to the lees : all times I have enjoyed  
Greatly, have suffered greatly, both with those  
That loved me, and alone ; on shore, and when  
Through scudding drifts the rainy Hyades

Vext the dim sea : I am become a name ;  
 For always roaming with a hungry heart  
 Much have I seen and known ; cities of men  
 And manners, climates, councils, governments,  
 Myself not least, but honored of them all ;  
 And drunk delight of battle with my peers,  
 Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.  
 I am a part of all that I have met ;  
 Yet all experience is an arch wherethrough  
 Gleams that untravelled world, whose margin fades  
 Forever and forever when I move.  
 How dull it is to pause, to make an end,  
 To rust unburnished, not to shine in use !  
 As though to breathe were life. Life piled on life  
 Were all too little, and of one to me  
 Little remains : but every hour is saved  
 From that eternal silence, something more,  
 A bringer of new things ; and vile it were  
 For some three suns to store and hoard myself,  
 And this gray spirit yearning in desire  
 To follow knowledge, like a sinking star,  
 Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.

This is my son, mine own Telemachus,  
 To whom I leave the sceptre and the isle—  
 Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil  
 This labor, by slow prudence to make mild  
 A rugged people, and through soft degrees  
 Subdue them to the useful and the good.  
 Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere  
 Of common duties, decent not to fail  
 In offices of tenderness, and pay  
 Meet adoration to my household gods  
 When I am gone. He works his work, I mine.

There lies the port : the vessel puffs her sail :  
 There gloom the dark broad seas. My mariners,  
 Souls that have toiled, and wrought, and thought  
 with me—

That ever with a frolic welcome took  
 The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed

Free hearts, free foreheads—you and I are old;  
Old age hath yet his honor and his toil;  
Death closes all: but something ere the end,  
Some work of noble note, may yet be done,  
Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods.  
The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks:  
The long day wanes: the slow moon climbs: the  
deep

Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,  
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.  
Push off, and sitting well in order smite  
The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds  
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths  
Of all the western stars, until I die.  
It may be that the gulfs will wash us down:  
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,  
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.  
Though much is taken, much abides; and though  
We are not now that strength which in old days  
Moved earth and heaven; that which we are, we  
are;  
One equal temper of heroic hearts,  
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will  
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

### LOCKSLEY HALL.

COMRADES, leave me here a little, while as yet 'tis  
early morn:  
Leave me here, and when you want me, sound  
upon the bugle-horn.

'Tis the place, and all around it, as of old, the cur-  
lews call.  
Dreary gleams about the moorland flying over  
Locksley Hall;

Locksley Hall, that in the distance overlooks the  
sandy tracts,  
And the hollow ocean-ridges roaring into cataracts.

Many a night from yonder ivied casement, ere I  
went to rest,  
Did I look on great Orion sloping slowly to the  
West.

Many a night I saw the Pleiads, rising through the  
mellow shade,  
Glitter like a swarm of fire-flies tangled in a silver  
braid.

Here about the beach I wandered, nourishing a  
youth sublime  
With the fairy tales of science, and the long result  
of Time;

When the centuries behind me like a fruitful land  
reposed;  
When I clung to all the present for the promise  
that it closed:

When I dipt into the future far as human eye could  
see;  
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder  
that would be.—

In the Spring a fuller crimson comes upon the  
Robin's breast;  
In the Spring the wanton lapwing gets himself  
another crest;

In the Spring a livelier iris changes on the bur-  
nished dove;  
In the Spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to  
thoughts of love.

Then her cheek was pale and thinner than should  
    be for one so young,  
And her eyes on all my motions with a mute ob-  
    servance hung.

And I said, "My cousin Amy, speak, and speak the  
    truth to me,  
Trust me, cousin, all the current of my being sets  
    to thee."

On her pallid cheek and forehead came a color and  
    a light,  
As I have seen the rosy red flushing in the northern  
    night.

And she turned—her bosom shaken with a sudden  
    storm of sighs—  
All the spirit deeply dawning in the dark of hazel  
    eyes—

Saying, "I have hid my feelings, fearing they should  
    do me wrong ;"  
Saying, "Dost thou love me, cousin ?" weeping, "I  
    have loved thee long."

Love took up the glass of Time, and turned it in  
    his glowing hands ;  
Every moment, lightly shaken, ran itself in golden  
    sands.

Love took up the harp of Life, and smote on all the  
    chords with might ;  
Smote the chord of Self, that, trembling, passed in  
    music out of sight.

Many a morning on the moorland did we hear the  
    copses ring,  
And her whisper thronged my pulses with the ful-  
    ness of the Spring.

Many an evening by the waters did we watch the  
stately ships,  
And our spirits rushed together at the touching of  
the lips.

O my cousin, shallow-hearted! O my Amy, mine  
no more!  
O the dreary, dreary moorland! O the barren,  
barren shore!

Falser than all fancy fathoms, falser than all songs  
have sung,  
Puppet to a father's threat, and servile to a shrew-  
ish tongue!

Is it well to wish thee happy?—having known  
me—to decline  
On a range of lower feelings and a narrower heart  
than mine!

Yet it shall be: thou shalt lower to his level day by  
day,  
What is fine within thee growing coarse to sympa-  
thize with clay.

As the husband is, the wife is; thou art mated with  
a clown,  
And the grossness of his nature will have weight to  
drag thee down.

He will hold thee, when his passion shall have spent  
its novel force,  
Something better than his dog, a little dearer than  
his horse.

What is this? his eyes are heavy: think not they  
are glazed with wine.  
Go to him: it is thy duty: kiss him: take his hand  
in thine.



It may be my lord is weary, that his brain is over-  
wrought:

Soothe him with thy finer fancies, touch him with  
thy lighter thought.

He will answer to the purpose, easy things to under-  
stand—

Better thou wert dead before me, though I slew  
thee with my hand!

Better thou and I were lying, hidden from the  
heart's disgrace,  
Rolled in one another's arms, and silent in a last  
embrace.

Cursed be the social wants that sin against the  
strength of youth!

Cursed be the social lies that warp us from the living  
truth!

Cursed be the sickly forms that err from honest  
Nature's rule!

Cursed be the gold that gilds the straitened forehead  
of the fool!

Well,—'tis well that I should bluster!—Hadst thou  
less unworthy proved—

Would to God—for I had loved thee more than ever  
wife was loved.

Am I mad, that I should cherish that which bears  
but bitter fruit?

I will pluck it from my bosom, though my heart be  
at the root.

Never, though my mortal summers to such length  
of years should come

As the many-wintered crow that leads the clanging  
rookery home.

Where is comfort ? in division of the records of the  
mind ?

Can I part her from herself, and love her, as I knew  
her, kind ?

I remember one that perished : sweetly did she  
speak and move :

Such a one do I remember, whom to look at was to  
love.

Can I think of her as dead, and love her for the  
love she bore ?

No—she never loved me truly : love is love forever-  
more.

Comfort ? comfort scorned of devils ! this is truth  
the poet sings,

That a sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering  
happier things.

Drug thy memories, lest thou learn it, lest thy heart  
be put to proof,

In the dead, unhappy night, and when the rain is  
on the roof.

Like a dog, he hunts in dreams, and thou art staring  
at the wall,

Where the dying night-lamp flickers, and the  
shadows rise and fall.

Then a hand shall pass before thee, pointing to his  
drunken sleep,

To thy widowed marriage-pillows, to the tears that  
thou wilt weep.

Thou shalt hear the "Never, never," whispered by  
the phantom years,

And a song from out the distance in the ringing of  
thine ears

And an eye shall vex thee, looking ancient kindness  
on thy pain.

Turn thee, turn thee on thy pillow ; get thee to thy  
rest again.

Nay, but Nature brings thee solace ; for a tender  
voice will cry.

'Tis a purer life than thine ; a lip to drain thy  
trouble dry.

Baby lips will laugh me down : my latest rival  
brings thee rest.

Baby fingers, waxen touches, press me from the  
mother's breast.

O, the child too clothes the father with a dearness  
not his due.

Half is thine and half is his : it will be worthy of  
the two.

O, I see thee old and formal, fitted to thy petty  
part,

With a little hoard of maxims preaching down a  
daughter's heart.

" They were dangerous guides the feelings—she  
herself was not exempt—

Truly, she herself had suffered"—Perish in thy  
self-contempt !

Overlive it—lower yet—be happy ! wherefore should  
I care ?

I myself must mix with action, lest I wither by  
despair.

What is that which I should turn to, lighting upon  
days like these ?

Every door is barred with gold, and opens but to  
golden keys.

Every gate is thronged with suitors, all the markets  
overflow.

I have but an angry fancy : what is that which I  
should do ?

I had been content to perish, falling on the foeman's  
ground,

When the ranks are rolled in vapor, and the winds  
are laid with sound.

But the jingling of the guinea helps the hurt that  
Honor feels,

And the nations do but murmur, snarling at each  
other's heels.

Can I but relive in sadness ? I will turn that earlier  
page.

Hide me from my deep emotion, oh thou wondrous  
Mother-Age !

Make me feel the wild pulsation that I felt before  
the strife,

When I heard my days before me, and the tumult  
of my life ;

Yearning for the large excitement that the coming  
years would yield,

Eager-hearted as a boy when first he leaves his  
father's field,

And at night along the dusky highway near and  
nearer drawn,

Sees in heaven the light of London flaring like a  
dreary dawn ;

And his spirit leaps within him to be gone before  
him then,

Underneath the light he looks at, in among the  
throngs of men ;

Men, my brothers, men the workers, ever reaping  
something new :

That which they have done but earnest of the things  
that they shall do :

For I dipt into the future, far as human eye could  
see,

Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder  
that would be ;

Saw the heavens fill with commerce, argosies of  
magic sails,

Pilots of the purple twilight, dropping down with  
costly bales ;

Heard the heavens fill with shouting, and there  
rained a ghastly dew

From the nations' airy navies grappling in the cen-  
tral blue ;

Far along the world-wide whisper of the south-wind  
rushing warm,

With the standards of the peoples plunging through  
the thunder-storm ;

Till the war-drum throbbed no longer, and the  
battle-flags were furled

In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the  
world ;

There the common sense of most shall hold a fretful  
realm in awe,

And the kindly earth shall slumber, lapt in universal  
law.

So I triumphed, ere my passion sweeping through  
me left me dry,

Left me with the palsied heart, and left me with the  
jaundiced eye ;

Eye, to which all order festers, all things here are  
out of joint,  
Science moves, but slowly, slowly, creeping on from  
point to point :

Slowly comes a hungry people, as a lion, creeping  
nigher,  
Glares at one that nods and winks behind a slowly-  
dying fire.

Yet I doubt not through the ages one increasing  
purpose runs,  
And the thoughts of men are widened with the  
process of the suns.

What is that to him that reaps not harvest of his  
youthful joys,  
Though the deep heart of existence beat forever  
like a boy's ?

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and I linger  
on the shore,  
And the individual withers, and the world is more  
and more.

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and he bears  
a laden breast,  
Full of sad experience moving toward the stillness  
of his rest.

Hark, my merry comrades call me, sounding on the  
bugle-horn,  
They to whom my foolish passion were a target for  
their scorn :

Shall it not be scorn to me to harp on such a  
mouldered string ?  
I am shamed through all my nature to have loved  
so slight a thing.

Weakness to be wroth with weakness ! woman's  
pleasure, woman's pain—  
Nature made them blinder motions bounded in a  
shallower brain :

Woman is the lesser man, and all thy passions,  
matched with mine,  
Are as moonlight unto sunlight, and as water unto  
wine—

Here at least, where nature sickens, nothing. Ah,  
for some retreat  
Deep in yonder shining Orient, where my life began  
to beat ;

Where in wild Mahratta-battle fell my father evil-  
starred ;  
I was left a trampled orphan, and a selfish uncle's  
ward.

Or to burst all links of habit—there to wander far  
away,  
On from island unto island at the gateways of the  
day.

Larger constellations burning, mellow moons and  
happy skies,  
Breadths of tropic shade and palms in cluster, knots  
of Paradise.

Never comes the trader, never floats an European  
flag,  
Slides the bird o'er lustrous woodland, swings the  
trailer from the crag ;

Droops the heavy-blossomed bower, hangs the  
heavy-fruited tree—  
Summer isles of Eden lying in dark-purple spheres  
of sea.

There methinks would be enjoyment more than in  
this march of mind,  
In the steamship, in the railway, in the thoughts  
that shake mankind.

There the passions, cramped no longer, shall have  
scope and breathing-space ;  
I will take some savage woman, she shall rear my  
dusky race.

Iron-jointed, supple-sinewed, they shall dive, and  
they shall run,  
Catch the wild goat by the hair, and hurl their  
lances in the sun ;

Whistle back the parrot's call, and leap the rain-  
bows of the brooks,  
Not with blinded eyesight poring over miserable  
books—

Fool, again the dream, the fancy ! but I *know* my  
words are wild,  
But I count the gray barbarian lower than the  
Christian child.

I, to herd with narrow foreheads, vacant of our  
glorious gains,  
Like a beast with lower pleasures, like a beast with  
lower pains !

Mated with a squalid savage—what to me were sun  
or clime ?  
I the heir of all the ages, in the foremost files of  
time—

I that rather held it better men should perish one  
by one,  
Than that earth should stand at gaze like Joshua's  
moon in Ajalon !



Not in vain the distance beacons. Forward, forward let us range.  
Let the great world spin forever down the ringing grooves of change.

Through the shadow of the globe we sweep into the younger day :  
Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay.

Mother-age, (for mine I knew not,) help me as when life begun :  
Rift the hills, and roll the waters, flash the lightnings, weigh the Sun—

O, I see the crescent promise of my spirit hath not set.  
Ancient founts of inspiration well through all my fancy yet.

Howsoever these things be, a long farewell to Locksley Hall !  
Now for me the woods may wither, now for me the roof-tree fall.

Comes a vapor from the margin, blackening over heath and holt,  
Cramming all the blast before it, in its breast a thunderbolt.

Let it fall on Locksley Hall, with rain or hail, or fire or snow ;  
For the mighty wind arises, roaring seaward, and I go.

## G O D I V A .

*I waited for the train at Coventry ;  
I hung with grooms and porters on the bridge,*

*To watch the three tall spires ; and there I shaped  
The city's ancient legend into this :—*

Not only we, the latest seed of Time,  
New men, that in the flying of a wheel  
Cry down the past, not only we, that prate  
Of rights and wrongs, have loved the people well,  
And loathed to see them overtaxed ; but she  
Did more, and underwent, and overcame,  
The woman of a thousand summers back,  
Godiva, wife to that grim Earl, who ruled  
In Coventry : for when he laid a tax  
Upon his town, and all the mothers brought  
Their children, clamoring, " If we pay, we starve !"  
She sought her lord, and found him, where he strode  
About the hall, among his dogs, alone,  
His beard a foot before him, and his hair  
A yard behind. She told him of their tears,  
And prayed him, " If they pay this tax, they starve."  
Whereat he stared, replying half-amazed,  
" You would not let your little finger ache  
For such as *these* ?"—" But I would die," said she.  
He laughed, and swore by Peter and by Paul :  
Then fillicked at the diamond in her ear ;  
" O ay, ay, ay, you talk !"—" Alas !" she said,  
" But prove me what it is I would not do."  
And from a heart as rough as Esau's hand,  
He answered, " Ride you naked through the town,  
And I repeal it ;" and nodding, as in scorn,  
He parted, with great strides among his dogs.

So left alone, the passions of her mind,  
As winds from all the compass shift and blow,  
Made war upon each other for an hour,  
Till pity won. She sent a herald forth,  
And bade him cry, with sound of trumpet, all  
The hard condition ; but that she would loose  
The people : therefore, as they loved her well,  
From then till noon no foot should pace the street,  
No eye look down, she passing ; but that all  
Should keep within, door shut, and window barred.

Then fled she to her inmost bower, and there  
Unclasped the wedded eagles of her belt,  
The grim Earl's gift ; but ever at a breath  
She lingered, looking like a summer moon  
Half-dipt in cloud : anon she shook her head,  
And showered the rippled ringlets to her knee ;  
Unclad herself in haste ; adown the stair  
Stole on ; and, like a creeping sunbeam, slid  
From pillar unto pillar, until she reached  
The gateway ; there she found her palfrey trapt  
In purple blazoned with armorial gold.

Then she rode forth, clothed on with chastity :  
The deep air listened round her as she rode,  
And all the low wind hardly breathed for fear.  
The little wide-mouthed heads upon the spout  
Had cunning eyes to see : the barking cur  
Made her cheek flame : her palfrey's footfall shot  
Light horrors through her pulses : the blind walls  
Were full of chinks and holes ; and overhead  
Fantastic gables, crowding, stared : but she  
Not less through all bore up, till, last, she saw  
The white-flowered elder thicket from the field  
Gleam through the Gothic archways in the wall.

Then she rode back, clothed on with chastity.  
And one low churl, compact of thankless earth,  
The fatal byword of all years to come,  
Boring a little auger-hole in fear,  
Peeped—but his eyes, before they had their will,  
Were shrivelled into darkness in his head,  
And dropt before him. So the Powers, who wait  
On noble deeds, cancelled a sense misused ;  
And she, that knew not, passed : and all at once,  
With twelve great shocks of sound, the shameless

noon

Was clashed and hammered from a hundred towers,  
One after one : but even then she gained  
Her bower ; whence reissuing, robed and crowned,  
To meet her lord, she took the tax away,  
And built herself an everlasting name.

## THE TWO VOICES.

A STILL small voice spake unto me,  
"Thou art so full of misery,  
Were it not better not to be?"

Then to the still small voice I said :  
"Let me not cast in endless shade  
What is so wonderfully made."

To which the voice did urge reply :  
"To-day I saw the dragon-fly  
Come from the wells where he did lie.

"An inner impulse rent the veil  
Of his old husk : from head to tail  
Came out clear plates of sapphire mail.

"He dried his wings : like gauze they grew :  
Through crofts and pastures wet with dew  
A living flash of light he flew."

I said, "When first the world began,  
Young Nature through five cycles ran,  
And in the sixth she moulded man.

"She gave him mind, the lordliest  
Proportion, and, above the rest,  
Dominion in the head and breast."

Thereto the silent voice replied :  
"Self-blinded are you by your pride :  
Look up through night : the world is wide.

"This truth within thy mind rehearse,  
That in a boundless universe  
Is boundless better, boundless worse.

“ Think you this mould of hopes and fears  
Could find no statelier than his peers  
In yonder hundred million spheres ? ”

It spake, moreover, in my mind :  
“ Though thou wert scattered to the wind,  
Yet is there plenty of the kind.”

Then did my response clearer fall :  
“ No compound of this earthly ball  
Is like another, all in all.”

To which he answered scoffingly :  
“ Good soul ! suppose I grant it thee,  
Who'll weep for thy deficiency ?

“ Or will one beam be less intense,  
When thy peculiar difference  
Is cancelled in the world of sense ? ”

I would have said, “ Thou canst not know,”  
But my full heart, that worked below,  
Rained through my sight its overflow.

Again the voice spake unto me :  
“ Thou art so steeped in misery,  
Surely 'twere better not to be.

“ Thine anguish will not let thee sleep,  
Nor any train of reason keep :  
Thou canst not think, but thou wilt weep.”

I said, “ The years with change advance :  
If I make dark my countenance,  
I shut my life from happier chance.

“ Some turn this sickness yet might take,  
Even yet.” But he : “ What drug can make  
A withered palsy cease to shake ? ”

I wept, " Though I should die, I know  
That all about the thorn will blow  
In tufts of rosy-tinted snow ;

" And men, through novel spheres of thought  
Still moving after truth long sought,  
Will learn new things when I am not."

" Yet," said the secret voice, " some time,  
Sooner or later, will gray prime  
Make thy grass hoar with early rime.

" Not less swift souls that yearn for light,  
Rapt after heaven's starry flight,  
Would sweep the tracts of day and night.

" Not less the bee would range her cells,  
The fuzzy prickle fire the dells,  
The foxglove cluster dappled bells."

I said that " all the years invent ;  
Each month is various to present  
The world with some development.

" Were this not well, to bide mine hour,  
Though watching from a ruined tower  
How grows the day of human power ?"

" The highest-mounted mind," he said,  
" Still sees the sacred morning spread  
The silent summit overhead.

" Will thirty seasons render plain  
Those lonely lights that still remain,  
Just breaking over land and main ?

" Or make that morn, from his cold crown  
And crystal silence creeping down,  
Flood with full daylight glebe and town ?

“Forerun thy peers, thy time, and let  
Thy feet, millenniums hence, be set  
In midst of knowledge dreamed not yet.

“Thou hast not gained a real height,  
Nor art thou nearer to the light,  
Because the scale is infinite.

“’Twere better not to breathe or speak,  
Than cry for strength, remaining weak,  
And seem to find, but still to seek.

“Moreover, but to seem to find  
Asks what thou lackest, thought resigned,  
A healthy frame, a quiet mind.”

I said, “When I am gone away,  
‘He dared not tarry,’ men will say,  
Doing dishonor to my clay.”

“This is more vile,” he made reply,  
“To breathe and loathe, to live and sigh,  
Than once from dread of pain to die.

“Sick art thou—a divided will  
Still heaping on the fear of ill  
The fear of men, a coward still.

“Do men love thee? Art thou so bound  
To men, that how thy name may sound  
Will vex thee lying underground?

“The memory of the withered leaf  
In endless time is scarce more brief  
Than of the garnered Autumn-sheaf.

“Go, vexed Spirit, sleep in trust;  
The right ear, that is filled with dust,  
Hears little of the false or just.”

“ Hard task, to pluck resolve,” I cried,  
“ From emptiness and the waste wide  
Of that abyss, or scornful pride !

“ Nay—rather yet that I could raise  
One hope that warmed me in the days  
While still I yearned for human praise.

“ When, wide in soul and bold of tongue,  
Among the tents I paused and sung,  
The distant battle flashed and rung.

“ I sung the joyful Pæan clear,  
And, sitting, burnished without fear  
The brand, the buckler, and the spear—

“ Waiting to strive a happy strife,  
To war with falsehood to the knife,  
And not to lose the good of life—

“ Some hidden principle to move,  
To put together, part and prove,  
And mete the bounds of hate and love—

“ As far as might be, to carve out  
Free space for every human doubt,  
That the whole mind might orb about—

“ To search through all I felt and saw,  
The springs of life, the depths of awe,  
And reach the law within the law :

“ At least, not rotting like a weed,  
But having sown some generous seed,  
Fruitful of further thought and deed,

“ To pass, when Life her light withdraws,  
Not void of righteous self-applause,  
Nor in a merely selfish cause—



“ In some good cause, not in mine own,  
To perish, wept for, honored, known,  
And like a warrior overthrown ;

“ Whose eyes are dim with glorious tears,  
When, soiled with noble dust, he hears  
His country’s war-song thrill his ears :

“ Then dying of a mortal stroke,  
What time the foeman’s line is broke,  
And all the war is rolled in smoke.”

“ Yea ! ” said the voice, “ thy dream was good,  
While thou abodest in the bud.  
It was the stirring of the blood.

“ If Nature put not forth her power  
About the opening of the flower,  
Who is it that could live an hour ?

“ Then comes the check, the change, the fall.  
Pain rises up, old pleasures pall.  
There is one remedy for all.

“ Yet hadst thou, through enduring pain,  
Linked month to month with such a chain  
Of knitted purport, all were vain.

“ Thou hadst not between death and birth  
Dissolved the riddle of the earth.  
So were thy labor little-worth.

“ That men with knowledge merely played,  
I told thee—hardly nigher made,  
Though scaling slow from grade to grade ;

“ Much less this dreamer, deaf and blind,  
Named man, may hope some truth to find,  
That bears relation to the mind.

“ For every worm beneath the moon  
Draws different threads, and late and soon  
Spins, toiling out his own cocoon.

“ Cry, faint not : either Truth is born  
Beyond the polar gleam forlorn,  
Or in the gateways of the morn.

“ Cry, faint not, climb : the summits slope  
Beyond the furthest flights of hope,  
Wrapt in dense cloud from base to cope,

“ Sometimes a little corner shines,  
As over rainy mist inclines  
A gleaming crag with belts of pines.

“ I will go forward, sayest thou,  
I shall not fail to find her now.  
Look up, the fold is on her brow.

“ If straight thy track, or if oblique,  
Thou know'st not. Shadows thou dost strike,  
Embracing cloud, Ixion-like ;

“ And owning but a little more  
Than beasts, abidest lame and poor,  
Calling thyself a little lower

“ Than angels. Cease to wail and brawl !  
Why inch by inch to darkness crawl ?  
There is one remedy for all.”

“ O dull, one-sided voice,” said I,  
“ Wilt thou make everything a lie,  
To flatter me that I may die ?

“ I know that age to age succeeds,  
Blowing a noise of tongues and deeds,  
A dust of systems and of creeds.

"I cannot hide that some have striven,  
Achieving calm, to whom was given  
The joy that mixes man with Heaven :

"Who, rowing hard against the stream,  
Saw distant gates of Eden gleam,  
And did not dream it was a dream ;

"But heard, by secret transport led,  
Even in the charnels of the dead,  
The murmur of the fountain-head—

"Which did accomplish their desire,  
Bore and forbore, and did not tire,  
Like Stephen, an unquenched fire.

"He heeded not reviling tones,  
Nor sold his heart to idle moans,  
Though cursed and scorned, and bruised with  
stones :

"But looking upward, full of grace,  
He prayed, and from a happy place  
God's glory smote him on the face."

The sullen answer slid betwixt :  
"Not that the grounds of hope were fixed,  
The elements were kindlier mixed."

I said, "I toil beneath the curse,  
But, knowing not the universe,  
I fear to slide from bad to worse.

"And that, in seeking to undo  
One riddle, and to find the true,  
I knit a hundred others new :

"Or that this anguish fleeting hence,  
Unmanacled from bonds of sense,  
Be fixed and frozen to permanence :

“ For I go, weak from suffering here ;  
Naked I go, and void of cheer :  
What is it that I may not fear ? ”

“ Consider well,” the voice replied,  
“ His face, that two hours since hath died ;  
Wilt thou find passion, pain or pride ?

“ Will he obey when one commands ?  
Or answer should one press his hands ?  
He answers not, nor understands.

“ His palms are folded on his breast :  
There is no other thing expressed  
But long disquiet merged in rest.

“ His lips are very mild and meek :  
Though one should smite him on the cheek,  
And on the mouth, he will not speak.

“ His little daughter, whose sweet face  
He kissed, taking his last embrace,  
Becomes dishonor to her race—

“ His sons grow up that bear his name,  
Some grow to honor, some to shame,—  
But he is chill to praise or blame.

“ He will not hear the north-wind rave,  
Nor, moaning, household shelter crave  
From winter rains that beat his grave.

“ High up the vapors fold and swim :  
About him broods the twilight dim :  
The place he knew forgetteth him.”

“ If all be dark, vague voice,” I said,  
“ These things are wrapped in doubt and dread,  
Nor canst thou show the dead are dead.

“ The sap dries up : the plant declines.  
A deeper tale my heart divines.  
Know I not Death ? the outward signs ?

“ I found him when my years were few ;  
A shadow on the graves I knew,  
And darkness in the village yew.

“ From grave to grave the shadow crept :  
In her still place the morning wept :  
Touched by his feet the daisy slept.

“ The simple senses crowned his head :  
‘ Omega ! thou art Lord,’ they said,  
‘ We find no motion in the dead.’”

“ Why, if man rot in dreamless ease,  
Should that plain fact, as taught by these,  
Not make him sure that he shall cease ?

“ Who forged that other influence,  
That heat of inward evidence,  
By which he doubts against the sense ?

“ He owns the fatal gift of eyes,  
That read his spirit blindly wise,  
Not simple as a thing that dies.

“ Here sits he shaping wings to fly ;  
His heart forebodes a mystery :  
He names the name Eternity.

“ That type of Perfect in his mind  
In Nature can he nowhere find,  
He sows himself on every wind.

“ He seems to hear a Heavenly Friend,  
And through thick veils to apprehend  
A labor working to an end.

“The end and the beginning vex  
His reason : many things perplex,  
With motions, checks, and counter-checks.

“He knows a baseness in his blood  
At such strange war with something good,  
He may not do the thing he would.

“Heaven opens inward, chasms yawn.  
Vast images in glimmering dawn,  
Half shown, are broken and withdrawn.

“Ah ! sure within him and without,  
Could his dark wisdom find it out,  
There must be answer to his doubt.

“But thou canst answer not again.  
With thine own weapon art thou slain,  
Or thou wilt answer but in vain.

“The doubt would rest, I dare not solve.  
In the same circle we revolve.  
Assurance only breeds resolve.”

As when a billow, blown against,  
Falls back, the voice with which I fenced  
A little ceased, but recommenced.

“Where wert thou when thy father played  
In his free field, and pastime made,  
A merry boy in sun and shade ?

“A merry boy they called him then.  
He sat upon the knees of men  
In days that never come again.

“Before the little ducts began  
To feed thy bones with lime, and ran  
Their course, till thou wert also man :

“ Who took a wife, who reared his race,  
Whose wrinkles gathered on his face,  
Whose troubles number with his days :

“ A life of nothings, nothing-worth,  
From that first nothing ere his birth  
To that last nothing under earth ! ”

“ These words,” I said, “ are like the rest,  
No certain clearness, but at best  
A vague suspicion of the breast :

“ But if I grant, thou might'st defend  
The thesis which thy words intend—  
That to begin implies to end ;

“ Yet how should I for certain hold,  
Because my memory is so cold,  
That I first was in human mould ?

“ I cannot make this matter plain,  
But I would shoot, howe'er in vain,  
A random arrow from the brain.

“ It may be that no life is found,  
Which only to one engine bound  
Falls off, but cycles always round.

“ As old mythologies relate,  
Some draught of Lethe might await  
The slipping through from state to state.

“ As here we find in trances, men  
Forget the dream that happens then,  
Until they fall in trance again.

“ So might we, if our state were such  
As one before, remember much,  
For those two likes might meet and touch.

“But, if I lapsed from nobler place,  
Some legend of a fallen race  
Alone might hint of my disgrace ;

“Some vague emotion of delight  
In gazing up an Alpine height,  
Some yearning toward the lamps of night.

“Or if through lower lives I came—  
Though all experience past became  
Consolidate in mind and frame—

“I might forget my weaker lot ;  
For is not our first year forgot ?  
The haunts of memory echo not.

“And men, whose reason long was blind,  
From cells of madness unconfined,  
Oft lose whole years of darker mind.

“Much more, if first I floated free,  
As naked essence, must I be  
Incompetent of memory :

“For memory dealing but with time,  
And he with matter, could she climb  
Beyond her own material prime ?

“Moreover, something is or seems,  
That touches me with mystic gleams,  
Like glimpses of forgotten dreams—

“Of something felt, like something here ;  
Of something done, I know not where ;  
Such as no language may declare.”

The still voice laughed. “I talk,” said he,  
“Not with thy dreams. Suffice it thee  
Thy pain is a reality.”



"But thou," said I, "hast missed thy mark,  
Who sought'st to wreck my mortal ark,  
By making all the horizon dark.

"Why not set forth, if I should do  
This rashness, that which might ensue  
With this old soul in organs new ?

"Whatever crazy sorrow saith,  
No life that breathes with human breath  
Has ever truly longed for death.

"'Tis life, whereof our nerves are scant,  
O life, not death, for which we pant ;  
More life, and fuller, that I want."

I ceased, and sat as one forlorn.  
Then said the voice, in quiet scorn,  
"Behold, it is the Sabbath morn."

And I arose, and I released  
The casement, and the light increased  
With freshness in the dawning east.

Like softened airs that blowing steal,  
When meres begin to uncongeal,  
The sweet church bells began to peal.

On to God's house the people prest :  
Passing the place where each must rest,  
Each entered like a welcome guest.

One walked between his wife and child,  
With measured footfall firm and mild,  
And now and then he gravely smiled.

The prudent partner of his blood  
Leaned on him, faithful, gentle, good,  
Wearing the rose of womanhood.

And in their double love secure,  
The little maiden walked demure,  
Pacing with downward eyelids pure.

These three made unity so sweet,  
My frozen heart began to beat,  
Remembering its ancient heat.

I blest them, and they wandered on :  
I spoke, but answer came there none :  
The dull and bitter voice was gone.

A second voice was at mine ear,  
A little whisper silver-clear,  
A murmur, " Be of better cheer."

As from some blissful neighborhood,  
A notice faintly understood,  
" I see the end, and know the good."

A little hint to solace woe,  
A hint, a whisper breathing low,  
" I may not speak of what I know."

Like an Æolian harp that wakes  
No certain air, but overtakes  
Far thought with music that it makes :

Such seemed the whisper at my side :  
" What is it thou knowest, sweet voice ? " I  
cried.

" A hidden hope," the voice replied :

So heavenly-toned, that in that hour  
From out my sullen heart a power  
Broke, like the rainbow from the shower,

To feel, although no tongue can prove,  
That every cloud, that spreads above  
And veileth love, itself is love.

And forth into the fields I went,  
And Nature's living motion lent  
The pulse of hope to discontent.

I wondered at the bounteous hours,  
The slow result of winter showers :  
You scarce could see the grass for flowers.

I wondered, while I paced along :  
The woods were filled so full with song,  
There seemed no room for sense of wrong.

So variously seemed all things wrought,  
I marvelled how the mind was brought  
To anchor by one gloomy thought ;

And wherefore rather I made choice  
To commune with that barren voice,  
Than him that said, " Rejoice ! rejoice ! "

## THE DAY-DREAM.

### PROLOGUE.

O, LADY FLORA, let me speak :  
A pleasant hour has past away  
While, dreaming on your damask cheek,  
The dewy sister-eyelids lay.  
As by the lattice you reclined,  
I went through many wayward moods  
To see you dreaming—and, behind,  
A summer crisp with shining woods.  
And I too dreamed, until at last  
Across my fancy, brooding warm,  
The reflex of a legend past,  
And loosely settled into form.

And would you have the thought I had,  
And see the vision that I saw,  
Then take the broidery-frame, and add  
A crimson to the quaint Macaw,  
And I will tell it. Turn your face,  
Nor look with that too-earnest eye—  
The rhymes are dazzled from their place,  
And ordered words asunder fly.

## THE SLEEPING PALACE.

The varying year with blade and sheaf  
Clothes and reclothes the happy plains;  
Here rests the sap within the leaf,  
Here stays the blood along the veins.  
Faint shadows, vapors lightly curled,  
Faint murmurs from the meadows come,  
Like hints and echoes of the world  
To spirits folded in the womb.

Soft lustre bathes the range of urns  
On every slanting terrace-lawn.  
The fountain to his place returns  
Deep in the garden lake withdrawn.  
Here droops the banner on the tower,  
On the hall-hearths the festal fires,  
The peacock in his laurel bower,  
The parrot in his gilded wires.

Roof-haunting martins warm their eggs:  
In these, in those the life is stayed.  
The mantles from the golden pegs  
Droop sleepily : no sound is made,  
Not even of a gnat that sings.  
More like a picture seemeth all  
Than those old portraits of old kings,  
That watch the sleepers from the wall.

Here sits the Butler with a flask  
Between his knees, half-drained ; and there  
The wrinkled steward at his task,  
The maid-of-honor blooming fair :  
The page has caught her hand in his :  
Her lips are severed as to speak :  
His own are pouted to a kiss :  
The blush is fixed upon her cheek.

Till all the hundred summers pass,  
The beams, that through the Oriel shine,  
Make prisms in every carven glass,  
And beaker brimmed with noble wine.  
Each baron at the banquet sleeps,  
Grave faces gathered in a ring.  
His state the king reposing keeps.  
He must have been a jovial king.

All round a hedge upshoots, and shows  
At distance like a little wood ;  
Thorns, ivies, woodbine, mistletoes,  
And grapes with bunches red as blood ;  
All creeping plants, a wall of green  
Close-matted, burr and brake and briar,  
And glimpsing over these, just seen,  
High up, the topmost palace-spire.

When will the hundred summers die,  
And thought and time be born again,  
And newer knowledge, drawing nigh,  
Bring truth that sways the soul of men ?  
Here all things in their place remain,  
As all were ordered, ages since.  
Come, Care and Pleasure, Hope and Pain,  
And bring the fated fairy Prince.

## THE SLEEPING BEAUTY.

Year after year unto her feet,  
    She lying on her couch alone,  
Across the purple coverlet,  
    The maiden's jet-black hair has grown,  
On either side her trancéd form  
    Forth streaming from a braid of pearl:  
The slumbrous light is rich and warm,  
    And moves not on the rounded curl.

The silk star-broidered coverlid  
    Unto her limbs itself doth mould  
Languidly ever ; and, amid  
    Her full black ringlets downward rolled,  
Gloweth forth each softly-shadowed arm  
    With bracelets of the diamond bright:  
Her constant beauty doth inform  
    Stillness with love, and day with light.

She sleeps : her breathings are not heard  
    In palace chambers far apart.  
The fragrant tresses are not stirred  
    That lie upon her charmed heart.  
She sleeps : on either hand upswells  
    The gold-fringed pillow lightly prest:  
She sleeps, nor dreams, but ever dwells  
    A perfect form in perfect rest.

## THE ARRIVAL.

All precious things, discovered late,  
    To those that seek them issue forth ;  
For love in sequel works with fate,  
    And draws the veil from hidden worth.  
He travels far from other skies—  
    His mantle glitters on the rocks—

A fairy Prince, with joyful eyes,  
And lighter-footed than the fox.

The bodies and the bones of those  
That strove in other days to pass,  
Are withered in the thorny close,  
Or scattered blanching in the grass.  
He gazes on the silent dead :  
“ They perished in their daring deeds.”  
This proverb flashes through his head,  
“ The many fail : the one succeeds.”

He comes, scarce knowing what he seeks :  
He breaks the hedge : he enters there :  
The color flies into his cheeks :  
He trusts to light on something fair ;  
For all his life the charm did talk  
About his path, and hover near  
With words of promise in his walk,  
And whispered voices at his ear.

More close and close his footsteps wind ;  
The magic music in his heart  
Beats quick and quicker, till he find  
The quiet chamber far apart.  
His spirit flutters like a lark,  
He stoops—to kiss her—on his knee.  
“ Love, if thy tresses be so dark,  
How dark those hidden eyes must be !”

#### THE REVIVAL.

A touch, a kiss ! the charm was snapt.  
There rose a noise of striking clocks,  
And feet that ran, and doors that clapt,  
And barking dogs, and crowing cocks ;  
A fuller light illumined all,  
A breeze through all the garden swept,

A sudden hubbub shook the hall,  
And sixty feet the fountain leapt.

The hedge broke in, the banner blew,  
The butler drank, the steward scrawled,  
The fire shot up, the martin flew,  
The parrot screamed, the peacock squalled,  
The maid and page renewed their strife,  
The palace banged, and buzzed and clackt,  
And all the long-pent stream of life  
Dashed downward in a cataract.

And last with these the king awoke,  
And in his chair himself upreared,  
And yawned, and rubbed his face, and spoke,  
"By holy rood, a royal beard!  
How say you? we have slept, my lords.  
My beard has grown into my lap."  
The barons swore, with many words,  
'Twas but an after-dinner's nap.

"Pardy," returned the king, "but still  
My joints are something stiff or so.  
My lord, and shall we pass the bill  
I mentioned half an hour ago?"  
The chancellor, sedate and vain,  
In courteous words returned reply:  
But dallied with his golden chain,  
And, smiling, put the question by.

#### THE DEPARTURE.

And on her lover's arm she leant,  
And round her waist she felt it fold,  
And far across the hills they went  
In that new world which is the old:  
Across the hills, and far away  
Beyond their utmost purple rim,



And deep into the dying day  
The happy princess followed him.

“ I’d sleep another hundred years,  
O love, for such another kiss ; ”  
“ O wake forever, love,” she hears,  
“ O love, ’twas such as this and this.”  
And o’er them many a sliding star,  
And many a merry wind was borne,  
And, streamed through many a golden bar,  
The twilight melted into morn.

“ O eyes long laid in happy sleep ! ”  
“ O happy sleep, that lightly fled ! ”  
“ O happy kiss, that woke thy sleep ! ”  
“ O love, thy kiss would wake the dead ! ”  
And o’er them many a flowing range  
Of vapor buoyed the crescent-bark,  
And, rapt through many a rosy change,  
The twilight died into the dark.

“ A hundred summers ! can it be ?  
And whither goest thou, tell me where ! ”  
“ O seek my father’s court with me,  
For there are greater wonders there.”  
And o’er the hills, and far away  
Beyond their utmost purple rim,  
Beyond the night, across the day,  
Through all the world she followed him.

#### MORAL.

So, Lady Flora, take my lay,  
And if you find no moral there,  
Go look in any glass and say,  
What moral is in being fair.

O, to what uses shall we put  
The wildweed-flower that simply blows?  
And is there any moral shut  
Within the bosom of the rose?

But any man that walks the mead  
In bud or blade, or bloom, may find,  
According as his humors lead,  
A meaning suited to his mind.  
And liberal applications lie  
In Art like Nature, dearest friend;  
So 'twere to cramp its use, if I  
Should hook it to some useful end.

## L'ENVOL.

You shake your head. A random string  
Your finer female sense offends.  
Well—were it not a pleasant thing  
To fall asleep with all one's friends;  
To pass with all our social ties  
To silence from the paths of men;  
And every hundred years to rise  
And learn the world, and sleep again;  
To sleep through terms of mighty wars,  
And wake on science grown to more,  
On secrets of the brain, the stars,  
As wild as aught of fairy lore;  
And all that else the years will show,  
The Poet-forms of stronger hours,  
The vast Republics that may grow,  
The Federations and the Powers;  
Titanic forces taking birth  
In divers seasons, divers climes;  
For we are Ancients of the earth,  
And in the morning of the times.

So sleeping, so aroused from sleep  
Through sunny decades new and strange,  
Or gay quinquennials, would we reap  
The flower and quintessence of change.

Ah, yet would I—and would I might !  
So much your eyes my fancy take—  
Be still the first to leap to light,  
That I might kiss those eyes awake !  
For, am I right or am I wrong,  
To choose your own you did not care ;  
You'd have *my* moral from the song,  
And I will take my pleasure there :  
And, am I right or am I wrong,  
My fancy, ranging through and through,  
To search a meaning for the song,  
Perforce will still revert to you ;  
Nor finds a closer truth than this  
All-graceful head, so richly curled,  
And evermore a costly kiss,  
The prelude to some brighter world.

For since the time when Adam first  
Embraced his Eve in happy hour,  
And every bird of Eden burst  
In carol, every bud to flower,  
What eyes, like thine, have wakened hopes ?  
What lips, like thine, so sweetly joined ?  
Where on the double rosebud droops  
The fulness of the pensive mind ;  
Which all too dearly self-involved,  
Yet sleeps a dreamless sleep to me ;  
A sleep by kisses undissolved,  
That lets thee neither hear nor see :  
But break it. In the name of wife,  
And in the rights that name may give,  
Are clasped the moral of thy life,  
And that for which I care to live.

## EPILOGUE.

So, Lady Flora, take my lay,  
And, if you find a meaning there,  
O whisper to your glass, and say,  
“What wonder, if he thinks me fair?”  
What wonder I was all unwise,  
To shape the song for your delight,  
Like long-tailed birds of Paradise,  
That float through Heaven, and cannot light?  
Or old-world trains, upheld at court  
By Cupid-boys of blooming hue—  
But take it—earnest wed with sport,  
And either sacred unto you.

## AMPHION.

MY father left a park to me,  
But it is wild and barren,  
A garden too with scarce a tree,  
And waster than a warren:  
Yet say the neighbors when they call,  
It is not bad but good land,  
And in it is the germ of all  
That grows within the woodland.

O had I lived when song was great  
In days of old Amphion,  
And ta'en my fiddle to the gate,  
Nor cared for seed or scion!  
And had I lived when song was great,  
And legs of trees were limber,  
And ta'en my fiddle to the gate,  
And fiddled in the timber!

'Tis said he had a tuneful tongue,  
Such happy intonation,

Wherever he sat down and sung  
He left a small plantation ;  
Wherever in a lonely grove  
He set up his forlorn pipes,  
The gouty oak began to move,  
And flounder into hornpipes.

The mountain stirred its bushy crown,  
And, as tradition teaches,  
Young ashes pirouetted down,  
Coquetting with young beeches ;  
And briony-vine and ivy-wreath  
Ran forward to his rhyming,  
And from the valleys underneath  
Came little copses climbing.

The linden broke her ranks and rent  
The woodbine wreaths that bind her,  
And down the middle buzz ! she went  
With all her bees behind her :  
The poplars, in long order due,  
With cypress promenaded,  
The shock-head willows two and two  
By rivers galloped.

Came wet-shod alder from the wave,  
Came yews, a dismal coterie ;  
Each plucked his one foot from the grave,  
Poussetting with a sloe-tree :  
Old elms came breaking from the vine,  
The vine streamed out to follow,  
And, sweating rosin, plumped the pine  
From many a cloudy hollow.

And wasn't it a sight to see,  
When, ere his song was ended,  
Like some great landslip, tree by tree,  
The country-side descended ;  
And shepherds from the mountain-eaves

Looked down, half-pleased, half-frightened,  
As dashed about the drunken leaves  
The random sunshine lightened !

O, nature first was fresh to men,  
And wanton without measure ;  
So youthful and so flexile then,  
You moved her at your pleasure.  
Twang out, my fiddle ! shake the twigs !  
And make her dance attendance :  
Blow, flute, and stir the stiff-set sprigs,  
And scirrhous roots and tendons.

'Tis vain ! in such a brassy age  
I could not move a thistle ;  
The very sparrows in the hedge  
Scarce answer to my whistle ;  
Or at the most, when three-parts-sick  
With strumming and with scraping,  
A jackass heehaws from the rick,  
The passive oxen gaping.

But what is that I hear ? a sound  
Like sleepy counsel pleading :  
O Lord !—'tis in my neighbor's ground,  
The modern Muses reading.  
They read Botanic Treatises,  
And Works on Gardening through there,  
And Methods of transplanting trees,  
To look as if they grew there.

The withered Misses ! how they prose  
O'er books of travelled seamen,  
And show you slips of all that grows  
From England to Van Diemen.  
They read in arbors clipt and cut,  
And alleys, faded places,  
By squares of tropic summer shut,  
And warmed in crystal cases.

But these, though fed with careful dirt,  
Are neither green nor sappy ;  
Half-conscious of the garden-squirt,  
The spindlings look unhappy.  
Better to me the meanest weed  
That blows upon its mountain,  
The vilest herb that runs to seed  
Beside its native fountain.

And I must work through months of toil,  
And years of cultivation,  
Upon my proper patch of soil,  
To grow my own plantation.  
I'll take the showers as they fall,  
I will not vex my bosom :  
Enough, if at the end of all  
A little garden blossom.

### ST. AGNES' EVE.

#### I.

DEEP on the convent-roof the snows  
Are sparkling to the moon :  
My breath to heaven like vapor goes :  
May my soul follow soon !  
The shadows of the convent-towers  
Slant down the snowy sward,  
Still creeping with the creeping hours  
That lead me to my Lord :  
Make Thou my spirit pure and clear  
As are the frosty skies,  
Or this first snowdrop of the year  
That in my bosom lies.

#### II.

As these white robes are soiled and dark,  
To yonder shining ground ;

As this pale taper's earthly spark,  
 To yonder argent round;  
 So shows my soul before the Lamb,  
 My spirit before Thee;  
 So in mine earthly house I am,  
 To that I hope to be.  
 Break up the heavens, oh Lord! and far,  
 Through all yon starlight keen,  
 Draw me, thy bride, a glittering star,  
 In raiment white and clean.

## III.

He lifts me to the golden doors;  
 The flashes come and go;  
 All heaven bursts her starry floors,  
 And strews her lights below,  
 And deepens on and up! the gates  
 Roll back, and far within  
 For me the Heavenly Bridegroom waits,  
 To make me pure of sin.  
 The sabbaths of Eternity,  
 One sabbath deep and wide—  
 A light upon the shining sea—  
 The Bridegroom with his bride!

## SIR GALAHAD.

## I.

My good blade carves the casques of men,  
 My tough lance thrusteth sure,  
 My strength is as the strength of ten,  
 Because my heart is pure.  
 The shattering trumpet shrilleth high,  
 The hard brands shiver on the steel,  
 The splintered spear-shafts crack and fly,  
 The horse and rider reel:  
 They reel, they roll in clanging lists,



And when the tide of combat stands,  
Perfume and flowers fall in showers,  
That lightly rain from ladies' hands.

## II.

How sweet are looks that ladies bend  
On whom their favors fall !  
For them I battle till the end,  
To save from shame and thrall :  
But all my heart is drawn above,  
My knees are bowed in crypt and shrine :  
I never felt the kiss of love,  
Nor maiden's hand in mine.  
More bounteous aspects on me beam,  
Me mightier transports move and thrill ;  
So keep I fair through faith and prayer  
A virgin heart in work and will.

## III.

When down the stormy crescent goes,  
A light before me swims,  
Between dark stems the forest glows,  
I hear a noise of hymns :  
Then by some secret shrine I ride ;  
I hear a voice, but none are there ;  
The stalls are void, the doors are wide,  
The tapers burning fair.  
Fair gleams the snowy altar-cloth,  
The silver vessels sparkle clean,  
The shrill bell rings, the censer swings,  
And solemn chants resound between.

## IV.

Sometimes on lonely mountain-meres  
I find a magic bark ;  
I leap on board : no helmsman steers :  
I float till all is dark.  
A gentle sound, an awful light !  
Three angels bear the holy Grail :

With folded feet, in stoles of white,  
On sleeping wings they sail.  
Ah, blessed vision ! blood of God !  
My spirit beats her mortal bars,  
As down dark tides the glory slides,  
And star-light mingles with the stars.

## V.

When on my goodly charger borne  
Through dreaming towns I go,  
The cock crows ere the Christmas morn,  
The streets are dumb with snow.  
The tempest crackles on the leads,  
And, ringing, spins from brand and mail ;  
But o'er the dark a glory spreads,  
And gilds the driving hail.  
I leave the plain, I climb the height ;  
No branchy thicket shelter yields ;  
But blessed forms in whistling storms  
Fly o'er waste fens and windy fields.

## VI.

A maiden knight—to me is given  
Such hope, I know not fear ;  
I yearn to breathe the airs of heaven  
That often meet me here.  
I muse on joy that will not cease,  
Pure spaces clothed in living beams,  
Pure lilies of eternal peace,  
Whose odors haunt my dreams ;  
And, stricken by an angel's hand,  
This mortal armor that I wear,  
This weight and size, this heart and eyes,  
Are touched, are turned to finest air.

## VII.

The clouds are broken in the sky,  
And through the mountain-walls  
A rolling organ-harmony

Swells up, and shakes and falls.  
Then move the trees, the copses nod,  
Wings flutter, voices hover clear :  
“ O just and faithful knight of God !  
Ride on ! the prize is near.”  
So pass I hostel, hall, and grange ;  
By bridge and ford, by park and pale,  
All-armed I ride, whate’er betide,  
Until I find the holy Grail.

## EDWARD GRAY.

SWEET Emma Moreland of yonder town  
Met me walking on yonder way,  
“ And have you lost your heart ? ” she said ;  
“ And are you married yet, Edward Gray ? ”

Sweet Emma Moreland spoke to me :  
Bitterly weeping I turned away :  
“ Sweet Emma Moreland, love no more  
Can touch the heart of Edward Gray.

“ Ellen Adair she loved me well,  
Against her father’s and mother’s will :  
To-day I sat for an hour and wept,  
By Ellen’s grave, on the windy hill.

“ Shy she was, and I thought her cold ;  
Thought her proud, and fled over the sea ;  
Filled I was with folly and spite,  
When Ellen Adair was dying for me.

“ Cruel, cruel the words I said !  
Cruelly came they back to-day :  
‘ You’re too slight and fickle,’ I said,  
‘ To trouble the heart of Edward Gray.’

“ There I put my face in the grass—  
 Whispered, ‘ Listen to my despair :  
 I repent me of all I did :  
 Speak a little, Ellen Adair !’

“ Then I took a pencil, and wrote  
 On the mossy stone, as I lay,  
 ‘ Here lies the body of Ellen Adair ;  
 And here the heart of Edward Gray !’

“ Love may come, and love may go,  
 And fly, like a bird, from tree to tree :  
 But I will love no more, no more,  
 Till Ellen Adair come back to me.

“ Bitterly wept I over the stone :  
 Bitterly weeping I turned away :  
 There lies the body of Ellen Adair !  
 And there the heart of Edward Gray ! ”

## WILL WATERPROOF'S LYRICAL MONOLOGUE.

### MADE AT THE COCK.

O PLUMP head-waiter at The Cock,  
 To which I most resort,  
 How goes the time ? ’Tis five o’clock.  
 Go fetch a pint of port :  
 But let it not be such as that  
 You set before chance-comers,  
 But such whose father-grape grew fat  
 On Lusitanian summers.

No vain libation to the Muse,  
 But may she still be kind,  
 And whisper lovely words, and use  
 Her influence on the mind.

To make me write my random rhymes,  
Ere they be half-forgotten ;  
Nor add and alter, many times,  
Till all be ripe and rotten.

I pledge her, and she comes and dips  
Her laurel in the wine,  
And lays it thrice upon my lips,  
These favored lips of mine ;  
Until the charm have power to make  
New life-blood warm the bosom,  
And barren commonplaces break  
In full and kindly blossom.

I pledge her silent at the board ;  
Her gradual fingers steal  
And touch upon the master-chord  
Of all I felt and feel.  
Old wishes, ghosts of broken plans,  
And phantom hopes assemble ;  
And that child's heart within the man's  
Begins to move and tremble.

Through many an hour of summer suns  
By many pleasant ways,  
Against its fountain upward runs  
The current of my days :  
I kiss the lips I once have kissed ;  
The gas-light wavers dimmer ;  
And softly, through a vinous mist,  
My college friendships glimmer.

I grow in worth, and wit, and sense,  
Unboding critic-pen,  
Or that eternal want of pence,  
Which vexes public men,  
Who hold their hands to all, and cry  
For that which all deny them—  
Who sweep the crossings, wet or dry,  
And all the world go by them.

Ah yet, though all the world forsake,  
 Though fortune clip my wings,  
 I will not cramp my heart, nor take  
 Half-views of men and things.  
 Let Whig and Tory stir their blood ;  
 There must be stormy weather ;  
 But for some true result of good  
 All parties work together.

Let there be thistles, there are grapes ;  
 If old things, there are new ;  
 Ten thousand broken lights and shapes,  
 Yet glimpses of the true.  
 Let riffs be rife in prose and rhyme,  
 We lack not rhymes and reasons,  
 As on this whirligig of Time  
 We circle with the seasons.

This earth is rich in man and maid ;  
 With fair horizons bound :  
 This whole wide earth of light and shade  
 Comes out, a perfect round.  
 High over roaring Temple-bar,  
 And, set in Heaven's third story,  
 I look at all things as they are,  
 But through a kind of glory.  
 \* \* \* \*

Head-waiter, honored by the guest  
 Half-mused, or reeling-ripe,  
 The pint, you brought me, was the best  
 That ever came from pipe.  
 But though the port surpasses praise,  
 My nerves have dealt with stiffer.  
 Is there some magic in the place ?  
 Or do my peptics differ ?

For since I came to live and learn,  
 No pint of white or red  
 Had ever half the power to turn  
 This wheel within my head,

Which bears a seasoned brain about,  
Unsubject to confusion,  
Though soaked and saturate, out and out,  
Through every convolution.

For I am of a numerous house,  
With many kinsmen gay,  
Where long and largely we carouse,  
As who shall say me nay :  
Each month, a birthday coming on,  
We drink, defying trouble,  
Or sometimes two would meet in one,  
And then we drank it double ;

Whether the vintage, yet unkept,  
Had relish fiery-new,  
Or, elbow-deep in sawdust, slept,  
As old as Waterloo ;  
Or stowed (when classic Canning died)  
In musty bins and chambers,  
Had cast upon its crusty side  
The gloom of ten Decembers.

The Muse, the jolly Muse, it is !  
She answered to my call,  
She changes with that mood or this,  
Is all-in-all to all :  
She lit the spark within my throat,  
To make my blood run quicker,  
Used all her fiery will, and smote  
Her life into the liquor.

And hence this halo lives about  
The waiter's hands, that reach  
To each his perfect pint of stout,  
His proper chop to each.  
He looks not like the common breed  
That with the napkin dally ;  
I think he came, like Ganymede,  
From some delightful valley.

The Cock was of a larger egg  
 Than modern poultry drop,  
 Stept forward on a firmer leg,  
 And crammed a plumper crop ;  
 Upon an ampler dunghill trod,  
 Crowed lustier, late and early,  
 Sipt wine from silver, praising God,  
 And raked in golden barley.

A private life was all his joy,  
 Till in a court he saw  
 A something-pottle-bodied boy,  
 That knuckled at the taw :  
 He stooped and clutched him, fair and good,  
 Flew over roof and casement :  
 His brothers of the weather stood  
 Stock-still for sheer amazement.

But he, by farmstead, thorpe and spire,  
 And followed with acclaims,  
 A sign to many a staring shire,  
 Came crowing over Thames.  
 Right down by smoky Paul's they bore,  
 Till, where the street grows straiter,  
 One fixed forever at the door,  
 And one became head-waiter.

\* \* \* \*

But whither would my fancy go ?  
 How out of place she makes  
 The violet of a legend blow  
 Among the chops and steaks !  
 'Tis but a steward of the can,  
 - One shade more plump than common ;  
 As just and mere a serving-man  
 As any, born of woman.

I ranged too high : what draws me down  
 Into the common day ?



Is it the weight of that half-crown,  
Which I shall have to pay ?  
For, something duller than at first,  
Nor wholly comfortable,  
I sit, (my empty glass reversed,)  
And thrumming on the table :

Half-fearful that, with self at strife,  
I take myself to task :  
Lest of the fulness of my life  
I leave an empty flask :  
For I had hope, by something rare,  
To prove myself a poet ;  
But, while I plan and plan, my hair  
Is gray before I know it.

So fares it since the years began,  
Till they be gathered up ;  
The truth that flies the flowing can,  
Will haunt the vacant cup :  
And others' follies teach us not,  
Nor much their wisdom teaches ;  
And most, of sterling worth, is what  
Our own experience preaches.

Ah ! let the rusty theme alone !  
We know not what we know.  
But for my pleasant hour, 'tis gone,  
'Tis gone, and let it go.  
'Tis gone : a thousand such have slipt  
Away from my embraces,  
And fallen into the dusty crypt  
Of darkened forms and faces.

Go, therefore, thou ! thy betters went  
Long since, and came no more :  
With peals of genial clamor sent  
From many a tavern-door,  
With twisted quirks and happy hits,  
From misty men of letters ;

The tavern-hours of mighty wits—  
Thine elders and thy betters.

Hours, when the Poet's words and looks  
Had yet their native glow :  
Nor yet the fear of little books  
Had made him talk for show ;  
But, all his vast heart sherris-warmed,  
He flashed his random speeches ;  
Ere days, that deal in ana, swarmed  
His literary leeches.

So mix forever with the past,  
Like all good things on earth !  
For should I prize thee, couldst thou last,  
At half thy real worth ?  
I hold it good, good things should pass :  
With time I will not quarrel :  
It is but yonder empty glass  
That makes me maudlin-moral.

\* \* \* \*

Head-waiter of the chop-house here,  
To which I most resort,  
I too-must part : I hold thee dear  
For this good pint of port.  
For this, thou shalt from all things suck  
Marrow of mirth and laughter ;  
And, wheresoe'er thou move, good luck  
Shall fling her old shoe after.

But thou wilt never move from hence.  
The sphere thy fate allots :  
Thy latter days increased with pence  
Go down among the pots :  
Thou battenest by the greasy gleam  
In haunts of hungry sinners,  
Old boxes, larded with the steam  
Of thirty thousand dinners.

*We* fret, *we* fume, would shift our skins,  
Would quarrel with our lot ;  
*Thy* care is, under polished tins,  
To serve the hot-and-hot ;  
To come and go, and come again,  
Returning like the pewit,  
And watched by silent gentlemen,  
That trifle with the cruet.

Live long, ere from thy topmost head  
The thick-set hazel dies ;  
Long, ere the hateful crow shall tread  
The corners of thine eyes ;  
Live long, nor feel in head or chest  
Our changeful equinoxes,  
Till mellow Death, like some late guest,  
Shall call thee from the boxes.

But when he calls, and thou shalt cease  
To pace the gritted floor,  
And, laying down an unctuous lease  
Of life, shalt earn no more :  
No carved cross-bones, the types of Death,  
Shall show thee past to Heaven ;  
But carved cross-pipes, and, underneath,  
A pint-pot, neatly graven.

## LADY CLARE.

It was the time when lilies blow,  
And clouds are highest up in air,  
Lord Ronald brought a lily-white doe  
To give his cousin, Lady Clare.

I trow they did not part in scorn :  
Lovers long-betrothed were they :  
They two will wed the morrow morn ;  
God's blessing on the day !

“He does not love me for my birth,  
Nor for my lands so broad and fair;  
He loves me for my own true worth,  
And that is well,” said Lady Clare.

In there came old Alice the nurse,  
Said, “Who was this that went from thee?”  
“It was my cousin,” said Lady Clare,  
“To-morrow he weds with me.”

“O God be thanked!” said Alice the nurse,  
“That all comes round so just and fair:  
Lord Ronald is heir of all your lands,  
And you are not the Lady Clare.”

“Are ye out of your mind, my nurse, my  
nurse?”  
Said Lady Clare, “that ye speak so wild?”  
“As God’s above,” said Alice the nurse,  
“I speak the truth: you are my child.”

“The old Earl’s daughter died at my breast;  
I speak the truth as I live by bread!  
I buried her like my own sweet child,  
And put my child in her stead.”

“Falsely, falsely have ye done,  
O mother,” she said, “if this be true,  
To keep the best man under the sun  
So many years from his due.”

“Nay now, my child,” said Alice the nurse,  
“But keep the secret for your life,  
And all you have will be Lord Ronald’s,  
When you are man and wife.”

“If I’m a beggar born,” she said,  
“I will speak out, for I dare not lie.  
Pull off, pull off the brooch of gold,  
And fling the diamond necklace by.”

"Nay now, my child," said Alice the nurse,  
"But keep the secret all ye can."  
She said "Not so: but I will know  
If there be any faith in man."

"Nay now, what faith?" said Alice the nurse,  
"The man will cleave unto his right."  
"And he shall have it," the lady replied,  
"Though I should die to-night."

"Yet give one kiss to your mother dear!  
Alas, my child, I sinned for thee."  
"O mother, mother, mother," she said,  
"So strange it seems to me."

"Yet here's a kiss for my mother dear,  
My mother dear, if this be so,  
And lay your hand upon my head,  
And bless me, mother, ere I go."

She clad herself in a russet gown,  
She was no longer Lady Clare:  
She went by dale, and she went by down,  
With a single rose in her hair.

The lily-white doe Lord Ronald had brought  
Leapt up from where she lay,  
Dropt her head in the maiden's hand,  
And followed her all the way.

Down stept Lord Ronald from his tower:  
"O Lady Clare, you shame your worth!  
Why come you drest like a village maid,  
That are the flower of the earth?"

"If I come drest like a village maid,  
I am but as my fortunes are:  
I am a beggar born," she said,  
"And not the Lady Clare."

"Play me no tricks," said Lord Ronald,  
"For I am yours in word and deed.  
Play me no tricks," said Lord Ronald,  
"Your riddle is hard to read."

O and proudly stood she up!  
Her heart within her did not fail:  
She looked into Lord Ronald's eyes,  
And told him all her nurse's tale.

He laughed a laugh of merry scorn:  
He turned and kissed her where she stood:  
"If you are not the heiress born,  
And I," said he, "the next in blood—

"If you are not the heiress born,  
And I," said he, "the lawful heir,  
We two will wed to-morrow morn,  
And you shall still be Lady Clare."

## THE LORD OF BURLEIGH.

In her ear he whispers gayly,  
"If my heart by signs can tell,  
Maiden, I have watched thee daily,  
And I think thou lov'st me well."  
She replies, in accents fainter,  
"There is none I love like thee."  
He is but a landscape-painter,  
And a village maiden she.  
He to lips, that fondly falter,  
Presses his without reproof;  
Leads her to the village altar,  
And they leave her father's roof.  
"I can make no marriage present;  
Little can I give my wife.

Love will make our cottage pleasant,  
And I love thee more than life."  
They by parks and lodges going  
See the lordly castles stand :  
Summer woods, about them blowing,  
Made a murmur in the land.  
From deep thought himself he rouses,  
Says to her that loves him well,  
" Let us see these handsome houses  
Where the wealthy nobles dwell."  
So she goes by him attended,  
Hears him lovingly converse,  
Sees whatever fair and splendid  
Lay betwixt his home and hers ;  
Parks with oak and chestnut shady,  
Parks and ordered gardens great,  
Ancient homes of lord and lady,  
Built for pleasure and for state.  
All he shows her makes him dearer :  
Evermore she seems to gaze  
On that cottage growing nearer,  
Where they twain will spend their days.  
O but she will love him truly !  
He shall have a cheerful home ;  
She will order all things duly,  
When beneath his roof they come.  
Thus her heart rejoices greatly,  
Till a gateway she discerns  
With armorial bearings stately,  
And beneath the gate she turns ;  
Sees a mansion more majestic  
Than all those she saw before ;  
Many a gallant gay domestic  
Bows before him at the door.  
And they speak in gentle murmur,  
When they answer to his call,  
While he treads with footstep firmer,  
Leading on from hall to hall.

And, while now she wonders blindly,  
Nor the meaning can divine,  
Proudly turns he round and kindly,  
"All of this is mine and thine."  
Here he lives in state and bounty,  
Lord of Burleigh, fair and free,  
Not a lord in all the county  
Is so great a lord as he.  
All at once the color flushes  
Her sweet face from brow to chin :  
As it were with shame she blushes,  
And her spirit changed within.  
Then her countenance all over  
Pale again as death did prove :  
But he clasped her like a lover,  
And he cheered her soul with love.  
So she strove against her weakness,  
Though at times her spirit sank :  
Shaped her heart with woman's meekness  
To all duties of her rank :  
And a gentle consort made he,  
And her gentle mind was such  
That she grew a noble lady,  
And the people loved her much.  
But a trouble weighed upon her,  
And perplexed her, night and morn,  
With the burthen of an honor  
Unto which she was not born.  
Faint she grew, and ever fainter,  
As she murmured, "O, that he  
Were once more that landscape-painter,  
Which did win my heart from me !"  
So she drooped and drooped before him,  
Fading slowly from his side :  
Three fair children first she bore him,  
Then before her time she died.  
Weeping, weeping late and early,  
Walking up and pacing down,



Deeply mourned the Lord of Burleigh,  
 Burleigh-house by Stamford town.  
 And he came to look upon her,  
 And he looked at her and said,  
 "Bring the dress, and put it on her,  
 That she wore when she was wed."  
 Then her people, softly treading,  
 Bore to earth her body, drest  
 In the dress that she was wed in,  
 That her spirit might have rest.

## SIR LAUNCELOT AND QUEEN GUINEVERE.

### A FRAGMENT.

LIKE souls that balance joy and pain,  
 With tears and smiles from heaven again  
 The maiden Spring upon the plain  
 Came in a sun-lit fall of rain.

In crystal vapor everywhere  
 Blue isles of heaven laughed between,  
 And, far in forest-deeps unseen,  
 The topmost elm tree gathered green  
 From draughts of balmy air.

Sometimes the linnet piped his song :  
 Sometimes the throstle whistled strong :  
 Sometimes the sparrowhawk, wheeled along,  
 Hushed all the groves from fear of wrong :

By grassy capes with fuller sound  
 In curves the yellowing river ran,  
 And drooping chestnut-buds began  
 To spread into the perfect fan,  
 Above the teeming ground.

Then, in the boyhood of the year,  
Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere  
Rode through the coverts of the deer,  
With blissful treble ringing clear.

She seemed a part of joyous Spring:  
A gown of grass-green silk she wore,  
Buckled with golden clasps before;  
A light-green tuft of plumes she bore  
Closed in a golden ring.

Now on some twisted ivy-net,  
Now by some tinkling rivulet,  
In mosses mixt with violet,  
Her cream-white mule his pastern set:  
And fleeter now she skimmed the plains  
Than she whose elfin prancer springs  
By night to eery warblings,  
When all the glimmering moorland rings  
With jingling bridle-reins.

As she fled fast through sun and shade,  
The happy winds upon her played,  
Blowing the ringlet from the braid:  
She looked so lovely, as she swayed  
The rein with dainty finger-tips,  
A man had given all other bliss,  
And all his worldly worth for this,  
To waste his whole heart in one kiss  
Upon her perfect lips.

## A FAREWELL.

Flow down, cold rivulet, to the sea,  
Thy tribute wave deliver:  
No more by thee my steps shall be,  
Forever and forever.

Flow, softly flow, by lawn and lea  
A rivulet then a river :  
Nowhere by thee my steps shall be,  
Forever and forever.

But here will sigh thine alder tree  
And here thine aspen shiver ;  
And here by thee will hum the bee  
Forever and forever.

A thousand suns will stream on thee,  
A thousand moons will quiver ;  
But not by thee my steps shall be,  
Forever and forever.

### THE BEGGAR MAID.

HER arms across her breast she laid ;  
She was more fair than words can say :  
Barefooted came the beggar maid  
Before the King Cophetua.  
In robe and crown the king stept down,  
To meet and greet her on her way ;  
“ It is no wonder,” said the lords,  
“ She is more beautiful than day.”

As shines the moon in clouded skies,  
She in her poor attire was seen :  
One praised her ankles, one her eyes,  
One her dark hair and lovesome mien.  
So sweet a face, such angel grace,  
In all that land had never been :  
Cophetua sware a royal oath :  
“ This beggar maid shall be my queen !”

## THE VISION OF SIN.

I HAD a vision when the night was late :  
A youth came riding toward a palace-gate.  
He rode a horse with wings that would have flown,  
But that his heavy rider kept him down.  
And from the palace came a child of sin,  
And took him by the curls, and led him in,  
Where sat a company with heated eyes,  
Expecting when a fountain should arise :  
A sleepy light upon their brows and lips—  
As when the sun, a crescent of eclipse,  
Dreams over lake and lawn, and isles and capes—  
Suffused them, sitting, lying, languid shapes,  
By heaps of gourds, and skins of wine, and piles of  
grapes.

Then methought I heard a mellow sound,  
Gathering up from all the lower ground ;  
Narrowing in to where they sat assembled,  
Low voluptuous music winding trembled,  
Woven in circles : they that heard it sighed,  
Panted hand in hand with faces pale,  
Swung themselves, and in low tones replied ;  
Till the fountain spouted, showering wide  
Sleet of diamond-drift and pearly hail ;  
Then the music touched the gates and died ;  
Rose again from where it seemed to fail,  
Stormed in orbs of song, a growing gale ;  
Till thronging in and in, to where they waited,  
As 'twere a hundred-throated nightingale,  
'The strong tempestuous treble throbbed and palpi-  
tated ;  
Ran into its giddiest whirl of sound,  
Caught the sparkles, and in circles,  
Purple gauzes, golden hazes, liquid mazes,  
Flung the torrent rainbow round ;  
Then they started from their places,

Moved with violence, changed in hue,  
Caught each other with wild grimaces,  
Half-invisible to the view,  
Wheeling with precipitate paces  
To the melody, till they flew,  
Hair, and eyes, and limbs, and faces,  
Twisted hard in fierce embraces,  
Like to Furies, like to Graces,  
Dashed together in blinding dew :  
Till, killed with some luxurious agony  
The nerve-dissolving melody  
Fluttered headlong from the sky.

And then I looked up toward a mountain-tract,  
That girt the region with high cliff and lawn :  
I saw that every morning, far withdrawn  
Beyond the darkness and the cataract,  
God made himself an awful rose of dawn,  
Unheeded : and detaching, fold by fold,  
From those still heights, and, slowly drawing near,  
A vapor heavy, hueless, formless, cold,  
Came floating on for many a month and year,  
Unheeded : and I thought I would have spoken,  
And warned that madman ere it grew too late :  
But, as in dreams, I could not. Mine was broken,  
When that cold vapor touched the palace gate,  
And linked again. I saw within my head  
A gray and gap-toothed man as lean as death,  
Who slowly rode across a withered heath,  
And lighted at a ruined inn, and said :

“ Wrinkled ostler, grim and thin !  
Here is custom come your way ;  
Take my brute, and lead him in,  
Stuff his ribs with mouldy hay.

“ Bitter barmaid, waning fast !  
See that sheets are on my bed ;  
What ! the flower of life is past :  
It is long before you wed.

“ Slip-shod waiter, lank and sour,  
At The Dragon on the heath !  
Let us have a quiet hour,  
Let us hob-and-nob with Death.

“ I am old, but let me drink ;  
Bring me spices, bring me wine ;  
I remember, when I think,  
That my youth was half divine.

“ Wine is good for shrivelled lips,  
When a blanket wraps the day,  
When the rotten woodland drips,  
And the leaf is stamped in clay.

“ Sit thee down, and have no shame,  
Cheek by jowl, and knee by knee :  
What care I for any name ?  
What for order or degree ?

“ Let me screw thee up a peg :  
Let me loose thy tongue with wine :  
Callest thou that thing a leg ?  
Which is thinnest ? thine or mine ?

“ Thou shalt not be saved by works :  
Thou hast been a sinner too :  
Ruined trunks on withered forks,  
Empty scarecrows, I and you !

“ Fill the cup, and fill the can :  
Have a rouse before the morn :  
Every moment dies a man,  
Every moment one is born.

“ We are men of ruined blood ;  
Therefore comes it we are wise.  
Fish are we that love the mud,  
Rising to no fancy-flies.

“ Name and fame ! to fly sublime  
Through the courts, the camps, the schools,  
Is to be the ball of Time,  
Banded by the hands of fools.

“ Friendship !—to be two in one—  
Let the canting liar pack !  
Well I know, when I am gone,  
How she mouths behind my back.

“ Virtue !—to be good and just—  
Every heart, when sifted well,  
Is a clot of warmer dust,  
Mixed with cunning sparks of hell.

“ O ! we two as well can look  
Whited thought and cleanly life  
As the priest, above his book  
Leering at his neighbor's wife.

“ Fill the cup, and fill the can :  
Have a rouse before the morn :  
Every moment dies a man,  
Every moment one is born.

“ Drink, and let the parties rave :  
They are filled with idle spleen,  
Rising, falling, like a wave.  
For they know not what they mean.

“ He that roars for liberty  
Faster binds a tyrant's power ;  
And the tyrant's cruel glee  
Forces on the freer hour. .

“ Fill the can, and fill the cup :  
All the windy ways of men  
Are but dust that rises up,  
And is lightly laid again.

“ Greet her with applausive breath,  
Freedom, gayly doth she tread ;  
In her right a civic wreath,  
In her left a human head.

“ No, I love not what is new ;  
She is of an ancient house :  
And I think we know the hue  
Of that cap upon her brows.

“ Let her go ! her thirst she slakes  
Where the bloody conduit runs :  
Then her sweetest meal she makes  
On the first-born of her sons.

“ Drink to lofty hopes that cool—  
Visions of a perfect State :  
Drink we, last, the public fool,  
Frantic love and frantic hate.

“ Chant me now some wicked stave,  
Till thy drooping courage rise,  
And the glow-worm of the grave  
Glimmer in thy rheumy eyes.

“ Fear not thou to loose thy tongue ;  
Set thy hoary fancies free ;  
What is loathsome to the young  
Savors well to thee and me.

“ Change, reverting to the years,  
When thy nerves could understand  
What there is in loving tears,  
And the warmth of hand in hand.

“ Tell me tales of thy first love—  
April hopes, the fools of chance ;  
Till the graves begin to move,  
And the dead begin to dance.



“ Fill the can, and fill the cup :  
All the windy ways of men  
Are but dust that rises up,  
And is lightly laid again.

“ Trooping from their mouldy dens  
The chap-fallen circle spreads :  
Welcome, fellow-citizens,  
Hollow hearts and empty heads !

“ You are bones, and what of that ?  
Every face, however full,  
Padded round with flesh and fat,  
Is but modelled on a skull.

“ Death is king, and Vivat Rex !  
Tread a measure on the stones,  
Madam—if I know your sex,  
From the fashion of your bones.

“ No, I cannot praise the fire  
In your eye—nor yet your lip :  
All the more do I admire  
Joints of cunning workmanship.

“ Lo ! God’s likeness—the ground-plan—  
Neither modelled, glazed, or framed :  
Buss me, thou rough sketch of man,  
Far too naked to be shamed !

“ Drink to Fortune, drink to Chance,  
While we keep a little breath !  
Drink to heavy Ignorance !  
Hob-and-nob with brother Death !

“ Thou art mazed, the night is long,  
And the longer night is near :  
What ! I am not all as wrong  
As a bitter jest is dear.

“ Youthful hopes, by scores, to all,  
When the locks are crisp and curled ;  
Unto me my maudlin gall,  
And my mockeries of the world.

“ Fill the cup, and fill the can !  
Mingle madness, mingle scorn !  
Dregs of life, and lees of man :  
Yet we will not die forlorn.”

The voice grew faint : there came a further change ;  
Once more uprose the mystic mountain-range :  
Below were men and horses pierced with worms,  
And slowly quickening into lower forms ;  
By shards and scurf of salt, and scum of dross,  
Old plash of rains, and refuse patched with moss.  
Then some one spake : “ Behold ! it was a crime  
Of sense avenged by sense that wore with time.”  
Another said : “ The crime of sense became  
The crime of malice, and is equal blame.”  
And one : “ He had not wholly quenched his  
power ;  
A little grain of conscience made him sour.”  
At last I heard a voice upon the slope  
Cry to the summit, “ Is there any hope ? ”  
To which an answer pealed from that high land,  
But in a tongue no man could understand :  
And on the glimmering limit far withdrawn  
God made himself an awful rose of dawn.

## THE SKIPPING-ROPE.

SURE never yet was Antelope  
Could skip so lightly by.  
Stand off, or else my skipping-rope  
Will hit you in the eye.

How lightly whirls the skipping-rope !  
How fairy-like you fly !  
Go, get you gone, you muse and mope—  
I hate that silly sigh.  
Nay, dearest, teach me how to hope,  
Or tell me how to die.  
There, take it, take my skipping-rope  
And hang yourself thereby.

MOVE EASTWARD, HAPPY EARTH, AND  
LEAVE.

MOVE eastward, happy earth, and leave  
Yon orange sunset waning slow ;  
From fringes of the faded eve,  
O, happy planet, eastward go ;  
Till over thy dark shoulder glow  
Thy silver sister-world, and rise  
To glass herself in dewy eyes  
That watch me from the glen below.

Ah, bear me with thee, smoothly borne,  
Dip forward under starry light,  
And move me to my marriage-morn,  
And round again to happy night.

BREAK, BREAK, BREAK.

BREAK, break, break,  
On thy cold gray stones, oh Sea !  
And I would that my tongue could utter  
The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman's boy,  
That he shouts with his sister at play !  
O well for the sailor lad,  
That he sings in his boat on the bay !

And the stately ships go on  
To their haven under the hill ;  
But oh for the touch of a vanished hand,  
And the sound of a voice that is still !

Break, break, break,  
At the foot of thy crags, oh Sea !  
But the tender grace of a day that is dead  
Will never come back to me.

### THE POET'S SONG.

THE rain had fallen, the Poet arose,  
He passed by the town, and out of the street,  
A light wind blew from the gates of the sun,  
And waves of shadow went over the wheat,  
And he sat him down in a lonely place,  
And chanted a melody loud and sweet,  
That made the wild-swan pause in her cloud,  
And the lark drop down at his feet.

The swallow stopt as he hunted the bee,  
The snake slipt under a spray,  
The wild hawk stood with the down on his beak  
And stared, with his foot on the prey,  
And the nightingale thought, " I have sung many  
songs,  
But never a one so gay,  
For he sings of what the world will be  
When the years have died away."

### THE PRINCESS; A MEDLEY.

#### PROLOGUE.

SIR WALTER VIVIAN all a summer's day  
Gave his broad lawns until the set of sun  
Up to the people : thither flocked at noon  
His tenants, wife and child, and thither half

The neighboring borough with their Institute,  
Of which he was the patron. I was there  
From college, visiting the son,—the son  
A Walter, too,—with others of our set,  
Five others: we were seven at Vivian-place.

And me that morning Walter showed the house,  
Greek, set with busts: from vases in the hall  
Flowers of all heavens, and lovelier than their  
names,  
Grew side by side; and on the pavement lay  
Carved stones of the Abbey-ruin in the park,  
Huge Ammonites, and the first bones of Time;  
And on the tables every clime and age  
Jumbled together; celts and calumets,  
Claymore and snowshoe, toys in lava, fans  
Of sandal, amber, ancient rosaries,  
Laborious orient ivory sphere in sphere,  
The cursed Malayan crease, and battle-clubs  
From the isles of palm: and higher on the walls,  
Betwixt the monstrous horns of elk and deer,  
His own forefathers' arms and armor hung.

And "this," he said, "was Hugh's at Agincourt;  
And that was old Sir Ralph's at Ascalon:  
A good knight he! we keep a chronicle  
With all about him,"—which he brought, and I  
Dived in a hoard of tales that dealt with knights  
Half-legend, half-historic, counts and kings  
Who laid about them at their wills and died;  
And mixt with these, a lady, one that armed  
Her own fair head, and sallying through the gate,  
Had beat her foes with slaughter from her walls.

"O miracle of women," said the book,  
"O noble heart who, being strait-besieged  
By this wild king to force her to his wish,  
Nor bent, nor broke, nor shunned a soldier's death,  
But now when all was lost or seemed as lost—  
Her stature more than mortal in the burst  
Of sunrise, her arm lifted, eyes on fire—

Brake with a blast of trumpets from the gate,  
 And, falling on them like a thunderbolt,  
 She trampled some beneath her horses' heels,  
 And some were whelmed with missiles of the wall,  
 And some were pushed with lances from the rock,  
 And part were drowned within the whirling brook :  
 O miracle of noble womanhood !”

So sang the gallant glorious chronicle ;  
 And, I all rapt in this, “ Come out,” he said,  
 “ To the Abbey : there is Aunt Elizabeth  
 And sister Lilia with the rest.” We went  
 (I kept the book and had my finger in it)  
 Down through the park : strange was the sight to me ;  
 For all the sloping pasture murmured, sown  
 With happy faces and with holiday.  
 There moved the multitude, a thousand heads :  
 The patient leaders of their Institute  
 Taught them with facts. One reared a font of  
     stone,  
 And drew, from butts of water on the slope,  
 The fountain of the moment, playing now  
 A twisted snake, and now a rain of pearls,  
 Or steep-up spout whereon the gilded ball  
 Danced like a wisp : and somewhat lower down  
 A man with knobs and wires and vials fired  
 A cannon : Echo answered in her sleep  
 From hollow fields : and here were telescopes  
 For azure views ; and there a group of girls  
 In circle waited, whom the electric shock  
 Dislinked with shrieks and laughter : round the  
     lake  
 A little clock-work steamer paddling plied  
 And shook the lilies : perched about the knolls  
 A dozen angry models jetted steam :  
 A petty railway ran : a fire-balloon  
 Rose gem-like up before the dusky groves  
 And dropt a fairy parachute and past :  
 And there through twenty posts of telegraph

They flashed a saucy message to and fro  
Between the mimic stations ; so that sport  
Went hand in hand with Science ; elsewhere  
Pure sport : a herd of boys with clamor bowled  
And stumped the wicket ; babies rolled about  
Like tumbled fruit in grass ; and men and maids  
Arranged a country dance, and flew through light  
And shadow, while the twangling violin  
Struck up with Soldier-laddie, and overhead  
The broad ambrosial aisles of lofty lime  
Made noise with bees and breeze from end to end.

Strange was the sight and smacking of the time;  
And long we gazed, but satiated at length  
Came to the ruins. High-arched and ivy-claspt,  
Of finest Gothic, lighter than a fire,  
Through one wide chasm of time and frost they  
gave

The park, the crowd, the house ; but all within  
The sward was trim as any garden lawn :  
And here we lit on Aunt Elizabeth,  
And Lilia with the rest, and lady friends  
From neighbor seats : and there was Ralph himself,  
A broken statue propt against the wall,  
As gay as any. Lilia, wild with sport,  
Half child, half woman as she was, had wound  
A scarf of orange round the stony helm,  
And robed the shoulders in a rosy silk,  
That made the old warrior from his ivied nook  
Glow like a sunbeam : near his tomb a feast  
Shone, silver-set ; about it lay the guests,  
And there we joined them : then the maiden Aunt  
Took this fair day for text, and from it preached  
An universal culture for the crowd,  
And all things great ; but we, unworthier, told  
Of college : he had climbed across the spikes,  
And he had squeezed himself betwixt the bars,  
And he had breathed the Proctor's dogs ; and one  
Discussed his tutor, rough to common men

But honeying at the whisper of a lord ;  
And one the Master, as a rogue in grain  
Veneered with sanctimonious theory.

But while they talked, above their heads I saw  
The feudal warrior lady-clad ; which brought  
My book to mind ; and opening this, I read  
Of old Sir Ralph a page or two that rang  
With tilt and tourney ; then the tale of her  
That drove her foes with slaughter from her walls,  
And much I praised her nobleness, and " Where,"  
Asked Walter, patting Lilia's head, (she lay  
Beside him,) " lives there such a woman now ? "

Quick answered Lilia, " There are thousands now  
Such women, but convention beats them down :  
It is but bringing up ; no more than that :  
You men have done it : how I hate you all !  
Ah, were I something great ! I wish I were  
Some mighty poetess, I would shame you then,  
That love to keep us children ! O, I wish  
That I were some great Princess, I would build  
Far off from men a college like a man's,  
And I would teach them all that men are taught ;  
We are twice as quick ! " And here she shook  
aside  
The hand that played the patron with her curls.

And one said, smiling, " Pretty were the sight  
If our old halls could change their sex, and flaunt  
With prudes for proctors, dowagers for deans,  
And sweet girl-graduates in their golden-hair.  
I think they should not wear our rusty gowns,  
But move as rich as Emperor-moths, or Ralph  
Who shines so in the corner ; yet I fear,  
If there were many Lillas in the brood,  
However deep you might embower the nest,  
Some boy would spy it."

At this upon the sword



She tapt her tiny silken-sandaled foot :  
"That's your light way ; but I would make it death  
For any male thing but to peep at us."

Petulant she spoke, and at herself she laughed ;  
A rosebud set with little wilful thorns,  
And sweet as English air could make her, she :  
But Walter hailed a score of names upon her,  
And "petty Ogress," and "ungrateful Puss,"  
And swore he longed at college, only longed,  
All else was well, for she-society.  
They boated and they cricketed ; they talked  
At wine, in clubs, of art, of politics ;  
They lost their weeks ; they vexed the souls of deans ;  
They rode ; they betted ; made a hundred friends,  
And caught the blossom of the flying terms,  
But missed the mignonette of Vivian-place,  
The little hearth-flower Lilia. Thus he spoke,  
Part banter, part affection.

"True," she said,  
"We doubt not that. O yes, you missed us much.  
I'll stake my ruby ring upon it you did."

She held it out ; and as a parrot turns  
Up through gilt wires a crafty loving eye,  
And takes a lady's finger with all care,  
And bites it for true heart, and not for harm,  
So he with Lilia's. Daintily she shrieked  
And wrung it. "Doubt my word again !" he said.  
"Come, listen ! here is proof that you were missed :  
We seven stayed at Christmas up to read ;  
And there we took one tutor as to read :  
The hard-grained Muses of the cube and square  
Were out of season : never man, I think,  
So mouldered in a sinecure as he :  
For while our cloisters echoed frosty feet,  
And our long walks were stript as bare as brooms,  
We did but talk you over, pledge you all  
In wassail : often, like as many girls—

Sick for the hollies and the yews of home—  
 As many little trifling Liliās—played  
 Charades and riddles as at Christmas here,  
 And *what's my thought* and *when* and *where* and *how*,  
 And often told a tale from mouth to mouth  
 As here at Christmas."

She remembered that :  
 A pleasant game, she thought : she liked it more  
 Than magic music, forfeits, all the rest.  
 But these—what kind of tales did men tell men,  
 She wondered, by themselves ?

A half-disdain  
 Perched on the pouted blossom of her lips :  
 And Walter nodded at me : "*He* began,  
 The rest would follow, each in turn ; and so  
 We forged a seven-fold story. Kind ? what kind ?  
 Chimeras, crotchets, Christmas solecisms,  
 Seven-headed monsters only made to kill  
 Time by the fire in winter."

"Kill him now,  
 The tyrant ! kill him in the summer too,"  
 Said Lilia ; "Why not now," the maiden Aunt.  
 "Why not a summer's as a winter's tale ?  
 A tale for summer, as befits the time ;  
 And something it should be to suit the place,  
 Heroic, for a hero lies beneath,  
 Grave, solemn !"

Walter warped his mouth at this  
 To something so mock-solemn, that I laughed,  
 And Lilia woke with sudden-shrilling mirth  
 An echo, like a ghostly woodpecker,  
 Hid in the ruins ; till the maiden Aunt  
 (A little sense of wrong had touched her face  
 With color) turned to me with "As you will—  
 Heroic if you will, or what you will,  
 Or be yourself your hero if you will."  
 "Take Lilia, then, for heroine," clamored he,  
 "And make her some great Princess, six feet high,

Grand, epic, homicidal ; and be you  
The Prince to win her ! ”

“ Then follow me, the Prince,”  
I answered ; “ each be hero in his turn !  
Seven and yet one, like shadows in a dream.—  
Heroic seems our Princess as required.—  
But something made to suit with time and place,  
A Gothic ruin, and a Grecian house,  
A talk of college and of ladies’ rights,  
A feudal knight in silken masquerade,  
And, yonder, shrieks and strange experiments,  
For which the good Sir Ralph had burnt them  
all,—

This *were* a medley ! we should have him back  
Who told the ‘ Winter’s tale,’ to do it for us.  
No matter : we will say whatever comes.  
And let the ladies sing us, if they will,  
From time to time, some ballad, or a song,  
To give us breathing-space.”

So I began,  
And the rest followed ; and the women sang  
Between the rougher voices of the men,  
Like linnets in the pauses of the wind :  
And here I give the story and the songs.

## I.

A PRINCE I was, blue-eyed, and fair in face,  
Of temper amorous, as the first of May,  
With lengths of yellow ringlet, like a girl,  
For on my cradle shone the northern star.

There lived an ancient legend in our house.  
Some sorcerer, whom a far-off grandsire burnt  
Because he cast no shadow, had foretold,  
Dying, that none of all our blood should know  
The shadow from the substance, and that one  
Should come to fight with shadows, and to fall.  
For so, my mother said, the story ran.

And, truly, waking dreams were, more or less,  
An old and strange affection of the house.  
Myself too had weird seizures, Heaven knows what:  
On a sudden, in the midst of men and day,  
And while I walked and talked as heretofore,  
I seemed to move among a world of ghosts,  
And feel myself the shadow of a dream.  
Our great court-Galen poised his gilt-head cane,  
And pawed his beard, and mutter'd catalepsy.  
My mother pitying made a thousand prayers;  
My mother was as mild as any saint,  
Half-canonized by all that looked on her,  
So gracious was her tact and tenderness:  
But my good father thought a king a king;  
He cared not for the affection of the house;  
He held his sceptre like a pedant's wand  
To lash offence, and with long arms and hands  
Reached out, and picked offenders from the mass  
For judgment.

Now it chanced that I had been,  
While life was yet in bud and blade, betrothed  
To one, a neighboring Princess; she to me  
Was proxy-wedded with a bootless calf  
At eight years old; and still from time to time  
Came murmurs of her beauty from the South,  
And of her brethren, youths of puissance;  
And still I wore her picture by my heart,  
And one dark tress; and all around them both  
Sweet thoughts would swarm, as bees about their  
queen.

But when the days drew nigh that I should wed,  
My father sent ambassadors with furs  
And jewels, gifts, to fetch her: these brought back  
A present, a great labor of the loom;  
And therewithal an answer vague as wind:  
Besides, they saw the king; he took the gifts;  
He said there was a compact; that was true:  
But then she had a will; was he to blame?

And maiden fancies ; loved to live alone  
Among her women : certain would not wed.

That morning in the presence-room I stood  
With Cyril and with Florian, my two friends :  
The first, a gentleman of broken means,  
(His father's fault,) but given to starts and bursts  
Of revel ; and the last, my other heart,  
And almost my half-self, for still we moved  
Together, twinned, as horse's ear and eye.

Now while they spake I saw my father's face  
Grow long and troubled, like a rising moon,  
Inflamed with wrath : he started on his feet,  
Tore the king's letter, snowed it down, and rent  
The wonder of the loom through warp and woof,  
From skirt to skirt ; and at the last he sware  
That he would send a hundred thousand men,  
And bring her in a whirlwind ; then he chewed  
The thrice-turned cud of wrath, and cooked his  
spleen,  
Communing with his captains of the war.

At last I spoke. " My father, let me go.  
It cannot be but some gross error lies  
In this report, this answer of a king,  
Whom all men rate as kind and hospitable :  
Or, maybe, I myself, my bride once seen,  
Whate'er my grief to find her less than fame,  
May rue the bargain made." And Florian said :  
" I have a sister at the foreign court,  
Who moves about the Princess ; she, you know,  
Who wedded with a nobleman from thence :  
He, dying lately, left her, as I hear,  
The lady of three castles in that land.  
Through her this matter might be sifted clean."  
And Cyril whispered : " Take me with you too."  
Then, laughing, " What if these weird seizures come  
Upon you in those lands, and no one near

To point you out the shadow from the truth !  
Take me : I'll serve you better in a strait ;  
I grate on rusty hinges here : " but " No ! "  
Roared the rough king, " you shall not ; we ourself  
Will crush her pretty maiden fancies dead  
In iron gauntlets : break the council up . "

But when the council broke, I rose and passed  
Through the wild woods that hung about the town ;  
Found a still place, and plucked her likeness out ;  
Laid it on flowers, and watched it lying bathed  
In the green gleam of dewy-tasselled trees :  
What were those fancies ? wherefore break her  
troth ?

Proud looked the lips : but while I meditated,  
A wind arose, and rushed upon the South,  
And shook the songs, the whispers, and the shrieks  
Of the wild woods together ; and a Voice  
Went with it, " Follow, follow, thou shalt win . "

Then, ere the silver sickle of that month  
Became her golden shield, I stole from court  
With Cyril and with Florian, unperceived,  
Cat-footed through the town, and half in dread  
To hear my father's clamor at our backs,  
With Ho ! from some bay-window shake the night ;  
But all was quiet : from the bastioned walls  
Like threaded spiders, one by one, we dropt,  
And flying reached the frontier : then we crost  
To a livelier land ; and so, by tilth and grange,  
And vines, and blowing bosks of wilderness,  
We gained the mother-city thick with towers,  
And in the imperial palace found the king.  
His name was Gama ; cracked and small his voice,  
But bland the smile that like a wrinkling wind  
On glassy water drove his cheek in lines ;  
A little dry old man, without a star,  
Not like a king : three days he feasted us,  
And on the fourth I spake of why we came,

And my betrothed. " You do us, Prince," he said,  
Airing a snowy hand and signet gem, . . .  
" All honor. We remember love ourselves  
In our sweet youth : there did a compact pass  
Long summers back, a kind of ceremony—  
I think the year in which our olives failed.  
I would you had her, Prince, with all my heart,  
With my full heart : but there were widows here,  
Two widows, Lady Psyche, Lady Blanche ;  
They fed her theories, in and out of place,  
Maintaining that with equal husbandry  
The woman were an equal to the man.  
They harped on this ; with this our banquets rang ;  
Our dances broke and buzzed in knots of talk ;  
Nothing but this : my very ears were hot  
To hear them : knowledge, so my daughter held,  
Was all in all ; they had but been, she thought,  
As children ; they must lose the child, assume  
The woman ; then, Sir, awful odes she wrote,  
Too awful, sure, for what they treated of,  
But all she is and does is awful ; odes  
About this losing of the child ; and rhymes  
And dismal lyrics, prophesying change  
Beyond all reason : these the women sang ;  
And they that know such things—I sought but  
peace,  
No critic I—would call them masterpieces :  
They mastered me. At last she begged a boon,  
A certain summer palace which I have  
Hard by your father's frontier : I said no,  
Yet being an easy man, gave it ; and there,  
All wild to found an University  
For maidens, on the spur she fled ; and more  
We know not,—only this : They see no men,  
Not even her brother Arac, nor the twins  
Her brethren, though they love her, look upon her  
As on a kind of paragon ; and I  
(Pardon me saying it) were much loth to breed  
Dispute betwixt myself and mine : but since

(And I confess with right) you think me bound  
In some sort, I can give you letters to her;  
And yet, to speak the truth, I rate your chance  
Almost at naked nothing."

Thus the king;  
And I, though nettled that he seemed to slur  
With garrulous ease and oily courtesies.  
Our formal compact, yet, not less (all frets  
But chafing me on fire to find my bride)  
Went forth again with both my friends. We rode  
Many a long league back to the North. At last  
From hills that looked across a land of hope  
We dropt with evening on a rustic town  
Set in a gleaming river's crescent-curve,  
Close at the boundary of the liberties;  
There entered an old hostel, called mine host  
To council, plied him with his richest wines,  
And showed the late-writ letters of the king.

He, with a long, low sibilation, stared  
As blank as death in marble; then exclaimed,  
Averring it was clear against all rules  
For any man to go: but as his brain  
Began to mellow, "If the king," he said,  
"Had given us letters, was he bound to speak?  
The king would bear him out;" and at the last—  
The summer of the vine in all his veins—  
"No doubt that we might make it worth his while.  
She once had passed that way; he heard her speak;  
She scared him; life! he never saw the like;  
She looked as grand as doomsday, and as grave:  
And he, he revered his liege-lady there;  
He always made a point to post with mares;  
His daughter and his housemaid were the boys:  
The land he understood for miles about  
Was tilled by women; all the swine were sows  
And all the dogs"—



But while he jested thus,  
A thought flashed through me, which I clothed in  
act,  
Remembering how we three presented Maid,  
Or Nymph, or Goddess, at high tide of feast,  
In masque or pageant at my father's court.  
We sent mine host to purchase female gear ;  
He brought it, and himself, a sight to shake  
The midriff of despair with laughter, help  
To lace us up, till, each, in maiden plumes  
We rustled : him we gave a costly bribe  
To guerdon silence, mounted our good steeds,  
And boldly ventured on the liberties.

We followed up the river as we rode,  
And rode till midnight, when the college lights  
Began to glitter firefly-like in copse  
And linden alley ; then we past an arch,  
Whereon a woman-statue rose with wings  
From four winged horses dark against the stars,  
And some inscription ran along the front,  
But deep in shadow : further on we gained  
A little street, half garden and half house ;  
But scarce could hear each other speak for noise  
Of clocks and chimes, like silver hammers falling  
On silver anvils, and the splash and stir  
Of fountains spouted up and showering down  
In meshes of the jasmine and the rose :  
And all about us pealed the nightingale,  
Rapt in her song, and careless of the snare.

There stood a bust of Pallas for a sign,  
By two sphere lamps blazoned like Heaven and  
Earth  
With constellation and with continent,  
Above an entry : riding in, we called ;  
A plump-armed Ostleress and a stable wench  
Came running at the call, and helped us down.  
Then stept a buxom hostess forth, and sailed

Full-blown before us into rooms which gave  
Upon a pillared porch, the bases lost  
In laurel: her we asked of that and this,  
And who were tutors. "Lady Blanche," she said,  
"And Lady Psyche." "Which was prettiest,  
Best-natured?" "Lady Psyche." "Hers are we,"  
One voice, we cried; and I sat down and wrote,  
In such a hand as when a field of corn  
Bows all its ears before the roaring East;

“Three ladies of the Northern empire pray  
Your Highness would enroll them with your own,  
As Lady Psyche’s pupils.”

This I sealed :

The seal was Cupid bent above a scroll,  
And o'er his head Uranian Venus hung,  
And raised the blinding bandage from his eyes :  
I gave the letter to be sent with dawn ;  
And then to bed, where half in doze I seemed  
To float about a glimmering night, and watch  
A full sea glazed with muffled moonlight, swell  
On some dark shore just seen that it was rich.

As through the land at eve we went,  
And plucked the ripened ears,  
We fell out, my wife and I,  
O, we fell out, I know not why,  
And kissed again with tears.

For when we came where lies the child  
We lost in other years,  
There above the little grave,  
O, there above the little grave,  
We kissed again with tears.

## II.

AT break of day the College Portress came ;  
She brought us Academic silks, in hue  
The lilac, with a silken hood to each,  
And zoned with gold ; and now when these were  
on,

And we as rich as moths from dusk cocoons,  
She, curtseying her obeisance, let us know  
The Princess Ida waited : out we paced,  
I first, and following through the porch that sang  
All round with laurel, issued in a court  
Compact of lucid marbles, bossed with lengths  
Of classic frieze, with ample awnings gay  
Betwixt the pillars, and with great urns of flowers.  
The Muses and the Graces, grouped in threes,  
Enringed a billowing fountain in the midst ;  
And here and there on lattice edges lay  
Or book or lute ; but hastily we past,  
And up a flight of stairs into the hall.

There at a board by tome and paper sat,  
With two tame leopards crouched beside her throne.  
All beauty compassed in a female form,  
The Princess ; liker to the inhabitant  
Of some clear planet close upon the Sun,  
Than our man's earth : such eyes were in her head,  
And so much grace and power, breathing down  
From over her arched brows, with every turn  
Lived through her to the tips of her long hands  
And to her feet. She rose her height, and said :

" We give you welcome : not without redound  
Of use and glory to yourselves ye come,  
The first-fruits of the stranger : aftertime,  
And that full voice which circles round the grave,  
Will rank you nobly, mingled up with me.  
What ! are the ladies of your land so tall ? "  
" We of the court," said Cyril. " From the court ? "

She answered, " then ye know the Prince ? " and he :  
" The climax of his age : as though there were  
One rose in all the world, your Highness that,  
He worships your ideal : " she replied :  
" We scarcely thought in our own hall to hear  
This barren verbiage, current among men,  
Light coin, the tinsel clink of compliment.  
Your flight from out your bookless wilds would seem  
As arguing love of knowledge and of power ;  
Your language proves you still the child. Indeed  
We dream not of him : when we set our hand  
To this great work, we purposed with ourselves  
Never to wed. You likewise will do well,  
Ladies, in entering here, to cast and fling  
The tricks, which make us toys of men, that so,  
Some future time, if so indeed you will,  
You may with those self-styled our lords ally  
Your fortunes, justlier balanced, scale with scale."

At those high words, we, conscious of ourselves,  
Perused the matting ; then an officer  
Rose up and read the statutes, such as these :  
Not for three years to correspond with home ;  
Not for three years to cross the liberties ;  
Not for three years to speak with any men ;  
And many more, which hastily subscribed,  
We entered on the boards : and " Now," she cried,  
" Ye are green wood, see ye warp not. Look, our  
hall !

Our statues !—not of those that men desire,  
Sleek Odalises, or oracles of mode,  
Nor stunted squaws of West or East ; but she  
That taught the Sabine how to rule, and she  
The foundress of the Babylonian wall,  
The Carian Artemisia strong in war,  
The Rhodope that built the pyramid,  
Clelia, Cornelia, with the Palmyrene  
That fought Aurelian, and the Roman brows  
Of Agrippina. Dwell with these, and lose

Convention, since to look on noble forms  
Makes noble through the sensuous organism  
That which is higher. O, lift your natures up :  
Embrace our aims ; work out your freedom. Girls,  
Knowledge is now no more a fountain sealed :  
Drink deep, until the habits of the slave,  
The sins of emptiness, gossip, and spite,  
And slander, die. Better not be at all  
Than not be noble. Leave us : you may go :  
To-day the Lady Psyche will harangue  
The fresh arrivals of the week before ;  
For they press in from all the provinces,  
And fill the hive."

She spoke, and, bowing, waved  
Dismissal ; back again we crost the court  
To Lady Psyche's : as we entered in,  
There sat along the forms, like morning doves  
That sun their milky bosoms on the thatch,  
A patient range of pupils ; she herself  
Erect behind a desk of satin-wood,  
A quick brunette, well-moulded, falcon-eyed,  
And on the hither side, or so she looked,  
Of twenty summers. At her left, a child,  
In shining draperies, headed like a star,  
Her maiden babe, a double April old,  
Aglaïa slept. We sat : the Lady glanced :  
Then Florian, but no livelier than the dame  
That whispered " Asses ears " among the sedge,  
" My sister." " Comely too by all that's fair,"  
Said Cyril. " O, hush, hush ! " and she began.

" This world was once a fluid haze of light,  
Till toward the centre set the starry tides  
And eddied into suns, that wheeling cast  
The planets : then the monster, then the man ;  
Tattooed or woaded, winter-clad in skins,  
Raw from the prime, and crushing down his mate ;  
As yet we find in barbarous isles, and here  
Among the lowest."

Thereupon she took  
 A bird's-eye-view of all the ungracious past;  
 Glanced at the legendary Amazon  
 As emblematic of a nobler age;  
 Appraised the Lycian custom, spoke of those  
 That lay at wine with Lar and Lucumo;  
 Ran down the Persian, Grecian, Roman lines  
 Of empire, and the woman's state in each,  
 How far from just: till warming with her theme,  
 She fulminated out her scorn of laws Salique  
 And little-footed China, touched on Mahomet  
 With much contempt, and came to chivalry:  
 When some respect, however slight, was paid  
 To woman, superstition all awry:  
 However, then commenced the dawn: a beam  
 Had slanted forward, falling in a land  
 Of promise; fruit would follow. Deep, indeed,  
 Their debt of thanks to her who first had dared  
 To leap the rotten pales of prejudice,  
 Disyoke their necks from custom, and assert  
 None lordlier than themselves but that which made  
 Woman and man. She had founded; they must  
     build:  
 Here might they learn whatever men were taught:  
 Let them not fear: some said their heads were less:  
 Some men's were small; not they the least of men;  
 For often fineness compensated size:  
 Besides, the brain was like the hand, and grew  
 With using: thence the man's, if more was more;  
 He took advantage of his strength to be  
 First in the field: some ages had been lost;  
 But woman ripened earlier, and her life  
 Was longer; and albeit their glorious names  
 Were fewer, scattered stars, yet since in truth  
 The highest is the measure of the man,  
 And not the Caffre, Hottentot, Malay,  
 Nor those horn-handed breakers of the glebe,  
 But Homer, Plato, Verulam; even so  
 With woman: and in arts of government,

Elizabeth and others ; arts of war,  
 The peasant Joan and others ; arts of grace,  
 Sappho and others vied with any man :  
 And, last not least, she who had left her place,  
 And bowed her state to them, that they might grow  
 To use and power on this Oasis, lapt  
 In the arms of leisure, sacred from the blight  
 Of ancient influence and scorn.

At last

She rose upon a wind of prophecy,  
 Dilating on the future ; “ everywhere  
 Two heads in council, two beside the hearth,  
 Two in the tangled business of the world,  
 Two in the liberal offices of life,  
 Two plummets dropt for one to sound the abyss  
 Of science, and the secrets of the mind :  
 Musician, painter, sculptor, critic, more :  
 And everywhere the broad and bounteous Earth  
 Should bear a double growth of those rare souls,  
 Poets, whose thoughts enrich the blood of the  
 world.”

She ended here, and beckoned us : the rest  
 Parted ; and, glowing full-faced welcome, she  
 Began to address us, and was moving on  
 In gratulation, till as when a boat  
 Tacks, and the slackened sail flaps, all her voice  
 Faltering and fluttering in her throat, she cried,  
 “ My brother ! ” “ Well, my sister.” “ O,” she  
 said,  
 “ What do you here ? and in this dress ? and these ?  
 Why, who are these ? a wolf within the fold !  
 A pack of wolves ! the Lord be gracious to me !  
 A plot, a plot, a plot to ruin all ! ”  
 “ No plot, no plot,” he answered. “ Wretched boy,  
 How saw you not the inscription on the gate,  
 LET NO MAN ENTER IN ON PAIN OF DEATH ? ”  
 “ And if I had,” he answered, “ who could think

The softer Adams of your Academe,  
 O, sister, Sirens though they be, were such  
 As chanted on the blanching bones of men ? ”  
 “ But you will find it otherwise,” she said.  
 “ You jest ; ill jesting with edge-tools ! My vow  
 Binds me to speak, and O, that iron will,  
 That axe-like edge unturnable, our Head,  
 The Princess.” “ Well, then, Psyche, take my life,  
 And nail me like a weasel on a grange  
 For warning : bury me beside the gate,  
 And cut this epitaph above my bones ;  
*Here lies a brother by a sister slain,  
 All for the common good of womankind.*”  
 “ Let me die, too,” said Cyril, “ having seen  
 And heard the Lady Psyche.”

I struck in :  
 “ Albeit so masked, Madam, I love the truth ;  
 Receive it ; and in me behold the Prince  
 Your countryman, affianced years ago  
 To the Lady Ida : here, for here she was,  
 And thus (what other way was left) I came.”  
 “ O Sir, oh Prince, I have no country ; none ;  
 If any, this ; but none. Whate’er I was  
 Disrooted, what I am is grafted here.  
 Affianced, Sir ? love-whispers may not breathe  
 Within this vestal limit, and how should I,  
 Who am not mine, say, live : the thunderbolt  
 Hangs silent ; but prepare : I speak ; it falls.”  
 “ Yet pause,” I said ; “ for that inscription there,  
 I think no more of deadly lurks therein,  
 Than in a clapper clapping in a garth,  
 To scare the fowl from fruit : if more there be,  
 If more and acted on, what follows ? war ;  
 Your own work marred ; for this your Academe,  
 Whichever side be Victor, in the halloo  
 Will topple to the trumpet down, and pass  
 With all fair theories only made to gild  
 A stormless summer.” “ Let the Princess judge



Of that," she said : " farewell, Sir—and to you.  
I shudder at the sequel, but I go."

" Are you that Lady Psyche," I rejoined,  
" The fifth in line from that old Florian,  
Yet hangs his portrait in my father's hall  
(The gaunt old Baron with his beetle brow  
Sun-shaded in the heat of dusty fights)  
As he bestrode my Grandsire, when he fell,  
And all else fled : we point to it, and we say,  
The loyal warmth of Florian is not cold,  
But branches current yet in kindred veins."  
" Are you that Psyche," Florian added, " she  
With whom I sang about the morning hills,  
Flung ball, flew kite, and raced the purple fly,  
And snared the squirrel of the glen ? are you  
That Psyche, wont to bind my throbbing brow,  
To smooth my pillow, mix the foaming draught  
Of fever, tell me pleasant tales, and read  
My sickness down to happy dreams ? are you  
That brother-sister Psyche, both in one ?  
You were that Psyche, but what are you now ? "  
" You are that Psyche," Cyril said, " for whom  
I would be that forever which I seem,  
Woman, if I might sit beside your feet,  
And glean your scattered sapience."

Then once more,  
" Are you that Lady Psyche," I began,  
" That on her bridal morn before she past  
From all her old companions, when the king  
Kissed her pale cheek, declared that ancient ties  
Would still be dear beyond the southern hills ;  
That were there any of our people there  
In want or peril, there was one to hear  
And help them ? look ! for such are these and I."  
" Are you that Psyche," Florian asked, " to whom,  
In gentler days, your arrow-wounded fawn  
Came flying while you sat beside the well ?

The creature laid his muzzle on your lap,  
 And sobbed, and you sobbed with it, and the blood  
 Was sprinkled on your kirtle, and you wept.  
 That was fawn's blood, not brother's, yet you wept.  
 O by the bright head of my little niece,  
 You were that Psyche, and what are you now?"  
 "You are that Psyche," Cyril said again,  
 "The mother of the sweetest little maid  
 That ever crowed for kisses."

"Out upon it!"

She answered, "peace! and why should I not play  
 The Spartan Mother with emotion, be  
 The Lucius Junius Brutus of my kind?  
 Him you call great: he for the common weal,  
 The fading politics of mortal Rome,  
 As I might slay this child, if good need were,  
 Slew both his sons: and I, shall I, on whom  
 The secular emancipation turns  
 Of half this world, be swerved from right to save  
 A prince, a brother? a little will I yield.  
 Best so, perchance, for us, and well for you.  
 O hard, when love and duty clash! I fear  
 My conscience will not count me fleckless; yet—  
 Hear my conditions: promise (otherwise  
 You perish) as you came to slip away,  
 To-day, to-morrow, soon: it shall be said,  
 These women were too barbarous, would not learn;  
 They fled, who might have shamed us: promise,  
 all."

What could we else, we promised each; and she,  
 Like some wild creature, newly-caged, commenced  
 A to-and-fro, so pacing till she paused  
 By Florian; holding out her lily arms,  
 Took both his hands, and smiling faintly said:  
 "I knew you at the first: though you have grown,  
 You scarce have altered: I am sad and glad  
 To see you, Florian. I give thee to death,

My brother ! it was duty spoke, not I.  
My needful seeming harshness, pardon it.  
Our mother, is she well ? ”

With that she kissed  
His forehead, then, a moment after, clung  
About him, and betwixt them blossomed up  
From out a common vein of memory  
Sweet household talk, and phrases of the hearth,  
And far allusion, till the gracious dews  
Began to glisten and to fall : and while  
They stood, so rapt, we gazing, came a voice,  
“ I brought a message here from Lady Blanche.”  
Back started she, and turning round we saw  
The Lady Blanche’s daughter where she stood,  
Melissa, with her hand upon the lock,  
A rosy blonde, and in a college gown  
That clad her like an April daffodilly,  
(Her mother’s color,) with her lips apart,  
And all her thoughts as fair within her eyes,  
As bottom agates seem to wave and float  
In crystal currents of clear morning seas.

So stood that same fair creature at the door.  
Then Lady Psyche, “ Ah—Melissa—you !  
You heard us ? ” and Melissa, “ O pardon me !  
I heard, I could not help it, did not wish :  
But, dearest Lady, pray you fear me not,  
Nor think I bear that heart within my breast,  
To give three gallant gentlemen to death.”  
“ I trust you,” said the other, “ for we two  
Were always friends, none closer, elm and vine :  
But yet your mother’s jealous temperament—  
Let not your prudence, dearest, drowse, or prove  
The Danaïd of a leaky vase, for fear  
This whole foundation ruin, and I lose  
My honor, these their lives.” “ Ah, fear me not,”  
Replied Melissa, “ no—I would not tell,  
No, not for all Aspasia’s cleverness,

No, not to answer, Madam, all those hard things  
 That Sheba came to ask of Solomon."  
 "Be it so," the other, "that we still may lead  
 The new light up, and culminate in peace,  
 For Solomon may come to Sheba yet."  
 Said Cyril, "Madam, he the wisest man,  
 Feasted the woman wisest then, in halls  
 Of Lebanonian cedar: nor should you  
 (Though madam *you* should answer, *we* would ask)  
 Less welcome find among us, if you came  
 Among us, debtors for our lives to you,  
 Myself for something more." He said not what,  
 But "Thanks," she answered, "go: we have been  
     too long  
 Together: keep your hoods about the face;  
 They do so that affect abstraction here.  
 Speak little; mix not with the rest; and hold  
 Your promise: all, I trust, may yet be well."

We turned to go, but Cyril took the child,  
 And held her round the knees against his waist,  
 And blew the swollen cheek of a trumpeter,  
 While Psyche watched them, smiling, and the child  
 Pushed her flat hand against his face and laughed;  
 And thus our conference closed.

And then we strolled  
 For half the day through stately theatres  
 Benched crescent-wise. In each we sat, we heard  
 The grave Professor. On the lecture slate  
 The circle rounded under female hands  
 With flawless demonstration: followed then  
 A classic lecture, rich in sentiment,  
 With scraps of thundrous Epic lilted out  
 By violet-hooded Doctors, elegies  
 And quoted odes, and jewels five-words-long,  
 That on the stretched forefinger of all Time  
 Sparkle forever: then we dipt in all  
 That treats of whatsoever is, the state,

The total chronicles of man, the mind,  
The morals, something of the frame, the rock,  
The star, the bird, the fish, the shell, the flower,  
Electric, chemic laws, and all the rest,  
And whatsoever can be taught and known ;  
Till like three horses that have broken fence,  
And glutted all night long breast-deep in corn,  
We issued gorged with knowledge, and I spoke :  
“ Why, Sirs, they do all this as well as we.”

They hunt old trails,” said Cyril, “ very well ;  
But when did woman ever yet invent ? ”  
“ Ungracious ! ” answered Florian, “ have you learnt  
No more from Psyche’s lecture, you that talked  
The trash that made me sick, and almost sad ? ”  
“ O trash,” he said, “ but with a kernel in it.  
Should I not call her wise who made me wise ?  
And learnt ? I learnt more from her in a flash,  
Than if my brainpan were an empty hull,  
And every Muse tumbled a science in.  
A thousand hearts lie fallow in these halls  
And round these halls a thousand baby loves  
Fly twanging headless arrows at the hearts,  
Whence follows many a vacant pang ; but O  
With me, Sir, entered in the bigger boy,  
The Head of all the golden-shafted firm,  
The long-limbed lad that had a Psyche too ;  
He cleft me through the stomacher ; and now  
What think you of it, Florián ? do I chase  
The substance or the shadow ? will it hold ?  
I have no sorcerer’s malison on me,  
No ghostly hauntings like his Highness. I  
Flatter myself that always, everywhere,  
I know the substance when I see it. Well,  
Are castles shadows ? Three of them ? Is she  
The sweet proprietress a shadow ? If not,  
Shall those three castles patch my tattered coat ?  
For dear are those three castles to my wants,  
And dear is sister Psyche to my heart,  
And two dear things are one of double worth,

And much I might have said, but that my zone  
 Unmanned me : then the Doctors ! O to hear  
 The Doctors ! O to watch the thirsty plants  
 Imbibing ! once or twice I thought to roar,  
 To break my chain, to shake my mane : but thou,  
 Modulate me, Soul of mincing mimicry !  
 Make liquid treble of that bassoon, my throat ;  
 Abase those eyes that ever loved to meet  
 Star-sisters answering under crescent brows ;  
 Abate the stride, which speaks of man, and loose  
 A flying charm of blushes o'er this cheek,  
 Where they like swallows coming out of time  
 Will wonder why they came : but hark the bell  
 For dinner, let us go ! ”

And in we streamed

Among the columns, pacing staid and still  
 By twos and threes, till all from end to end  
 With beauties every shade of brown and fair,  
 In colors gayer than the morning mist,  
 The long hall glittered like a bed of flowers.  
 How might a man not wander from his wits,  
 Pierced through with eyes, but that I kept mine  
 own

Intent on her, who rapt in glorious dreams  
 The second-sight of some Astræan age,  
 Sat compassed with professors : they, the while,  
 Discussed a doubt, and tossed it to and fro :  
 A clamor thickened, mixed with inmost terms  
 Of art and science ; Lady Blanche alone,  
 Of faded form and haughtiest lineaments,  
 With all her Autumn tresses falsely brown,  
 Shot sidelong daggers at us, a tiger-cat  
 In act to spring.

At last a solemn grace

Concluded, and we sought the gardens : there  
 One walked reciting by herself, and one  
 In this hand held a volume as to read,

And smoothed a petted peacock down with that :  
Some to a low song oared a shallop by,  
Or under arches of the marble bridge  
Hung, shadowed from the heat : some hid and  
sought

In the orange thickets : others tost a ball  
Above the fountain-jets, and back again  
With laughter : others lay about the lawns,  
Of the older sort, and murmured that their May  
Was passing : what was learning unto them ?  
They wished to marry ; they could rule a house ;  
Men hated learned women : but we three  
Sat muffled like the Fates ; and often came  
Melissa, hitting all we saw with shafts  
Of gentle satire, kin to charity,  
That harmed not : then day droopt ; the chapel  
bells

Called us : we left the walks ; we mixt with those  
Six hundred maidens, clad in purest white,  
Before two streams of light from wall to wall,  
While the great organ almost burst his pipes,  
Groaning for power, and rolling through the court  
A long melodious thunder to the sound  
Of solemn psalms and silver litanies,  
The work of Ida, to call down from Heaven  
A blessing on her labors for the world.

---

Sweet and low, sweet and low,  
Wind of the western sea,  
Low, low, breathe and blow,  
Wind of the western sea!  
Over the rolling waters go,  
Come from the dying moon, and blow,  
Blow him again to me ;  
While my little one, while my pretty one, sleeps.

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,  
Father will come to thee soon ;

Rest, rest, on mother's breast,  
    Father will come to thee soon;  
Father will come to his babe in the nest,  
Silver sails all out of the west,  
    Under the silver moon;  
Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one, sleep.

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## III.

MORN in the white wake of the morning star  
Came furrowing all the orient into gold.  
We rose, and each by other drest with care  
Descended to the court that lay three parts  
In shadow, but the Muses' heads were touched  
Above the darkness from their native East.

There while we stood beside the fount, and  
    watched  
Or seemed to watch the dancing bubble, approached  
Melissa, tinged with wan from lack of sleep,  
Or grief, and glowing round her dewy eyes  
The circled Iris of a night of tears;  
"And fly," she cried, "O fly, while yet you may!  
My mother knows:" and when I asked her "how,"  
"My fault," she wept, "my fault! and yet not  
    mine:

Yet mine in part. O hear me, pardon me!  
My mother, 'tis her wont from night to night  
To rail at Lady Psyche and her side.  
She says the Princess should have been the Head,  
Herself and Lady Psyche the two arms;  
And so it was agreed when first they came;  
But Lady Psyche was the right hand now,  
And she the left, or not, or seldom used;  
Hers more than half the students, all the love.  
And so last night she fell to canvass you:  
*Her* countrywomen! she did not envy her.  
'Who ever saw such wild barbarians?'



Girls?—more like men!’ and at these words the snake,

My secret, seemed to stir within my breast ;

And oh, Sirs, could I help it, but my cheek

Began to burn and burn, and her lynx eye

To fix and make me hotter, till she laughed :

‘ O marvellously modest maiden, you !

Men ! girls, like men ! why, if they had been men,

You need not set your thoughts in rubric thus

For wholesale comment.’ Pardon, I am shamed

That I must needs repeat for my excuse

What looks so little graceful : ‘ men ’ (for still

My mother went revolving on the word)

‘ And so they are,—very like men indeed—

And with that woman closeted for hours.’

Then came these dreadful words out one by one,

‘ Why—these—*are*—men : ’ I shuddered : ‘ and  
you know it ! ’

‘ O ask me nothing,’ I said : ‘ And she knows too,

And she conceals it ! ’ So my mother clutched

The truth at once, but with no word from me ;

And now thus early risen she goes to inform

The Princess : Lady Psyche will be crushed ;

But you may yet be saved, and therefore fly :

But heal me with your pardon ere you go.”

“ What pardon, sweet Melissa, for a blush ? ”

Said Cyril : “ Pale one, blush again : than wear

Those lilies, better blush our lives away.

Yet let us breathe for one hour more in Heaven,”

He added, “ lest some classic Angel speak

In scorn of us, ‘ They mounted, Ganymedes,

To tumble, Vulcans, on the second morn.’

But I will melt this marble into wax

To yield us further furlough : ” and he went.

Melissa shook her doubtful curls, and thought  
He scarce would prosper. “ Tell us,” Florian asked,  
“ How grew this feud betwixt the right and left.”

"O long ago," she said, "betwixt these two  
 Division smoulders hidden: 'tis my mother,  
 Too jealous, often fretful as the wind  
 Pent in a crevice: much I bear with her:  
 I never knew my father, but she says  
 (God help her!) she was wedded to a fool;  
 And still she railed against the state of things.  
 She had the care of Lady Ida's youth,  
 And from the Queen's decease she brought her up  
 But when your sister came she won the heart  
 Of Ida: they were still together, grew  
 (For so they said themselves) inosculated;  
 Consonant chords that shiver to one note:  
 One mind in all things: yet my mother still  
 Affirms your Psyche thieved her theories,  
 And angled with them for her pupil's love:  
 She calls her plagiarist; I know not what:  
 But I must go: I dare not tarry," and light  
 As flies the shadow of a bird she fled.

Then murmured Florian, gazing after her:  
 "An open-hearted maiden, true and pure.  
 If I could love, why this were she: how pretty  
 Her blushing was, and how she blushed again,  
 As if to close with Cyril's random wish:  
 Not like your Princess crammed with erring pride,  
 Nor like poor Psyche whom she drags in tow."

"The crane," I said, "may chatter of the crane,  
 The dove may murmur of the dove, but I  
 An eagle clang an eagle to the sphere.  
 My Princess, oh my Princess! true she errs,  
 But in her own grand way: being herself  
 Three times more noble than threescore of men  
 She sees herself in every woman else,  
 And so she wears her error like a crown  
 To blind the truth and me: for her, and her,  
 Hebes are they to hand ambrosia, mix  
 The nectar; but—ah she—whene'er she moves

The Samian Herè rises and she speaks  
A Memnon smitten with the morning Sun."

So saying, from the court we paced, and gained  
The terrace ranged along the Northern front,  
And leaning there on those balusters, high  
Above the empurpled champaign, drank the gale  
That blown about the foliage underneath,  
And sated with the innumerable rose,  
Beat balm upon our eyelids. Hither came  
Cyril, and yawning, "O hard task!" he cried,  
"No fighting shadows here! I forced a way  
Through solid opposition, crabbed and gnarled.  
Better to clear prime forests, heave and thump  
A league of street in summer solstice down,  
Than hammer at this reverend gentlewoman.  
I knocked, and bidden, entered; found her there  
At point to move, and settled in her eyes  
The green malignant light of coming storm.  
Sir, I was courteous, every phrase well-oiled,  
As man's could be; yet maiden-meek I prayed  
Concealment: she demanded who we were,  
And why we came? I fabled nothing fair,  
But, your example pilot, told her all.  
Up went the hushed amaze of hand and eye.  
But when I dwelt upon your old affiance,  
She answered sharply that I talked astray.  
I urged the fierce inscription on the gate,  
And our three lives. True—we had limed ourselves  
With open eyes, and we must take the chance.  
But such extremes, I told her, well might harm  
The woman's cause. 'Not more than now,' she said,  
'So puddled as it is with favoritism.'  
I tried the mother's heart. Shame might befall  
Melissa, knowing, saying not she knew:  
Her answer was, 'Leave me to deal with that.'  
I spoke of war to come and many deaths,  
And she replied, her duty was to speak,  
And duty duty, clear of consequences.

I grew discouraged, Sir; but since I knew  
No rock so hard but that a little wave  
May beat admission in a thousand years,  
I recommenced; 'Decide not ere you pause.  
I find you here but in the second place,  
Some say the third—the authentic foundress you.  
I offer boldly: we will seat you highest:  
Wink at our advent: help my Prince to gain  
His rightful bride, and here I promise you  
Some palace in our own land, where you shall reign  
The head and heart of all our fair she-world,  
And your great name flow on with broadening time  
Forever.' Well, she balanced this a little,  
And told me she would answer us to-day,  
Meantime be mute: thus much, nor more, I gained."

He ceasing, came a message from the Head.  
"That afternoon the Princess rode to take  
The dip of certain strata to the North.  
Would we go with her? we should find the land  
Worth seeing; and the river made a fall  
Out yonder:" then she pointed on to where  
A double hill ran up his furrowy forks  
Beyond the thick-leaved platans of the vale.

Agreed to, this, the day fled on through all  
Its range of duties to the appointed hour.  
Then summoned to the porch we went. She stood  
Among her maidens, higher by the head,  
Her back against a pillar, her foot on one  
Of those tame leopards. Kittenlike he rolled  
And pawed about her sandal. I drew near:  
I gazed. On a sudden my strange seizure came  
Upon me, the weird vision of our house:  
The Princess Ida seemed a hollow show,  
Her gay-furred cats a painted fantasy,  
Her college and her maidens empty masks,  
And I myself the shadow of a dream,  
For all things were and were not. Yet I felt

My heart beat thick with passion and with awe,  
Then from my breast the involuntary sigh  
Broke, as she smote me with the light of eyes  
That lent my knee desire to kneel, and shook  
My pulses, till to horse we got, and so  
Went forth in long retinue following up  
The river as it narrowed to the hills.

I rode beside her, and to me she said :  
“ O friend, we trust that you esteemed us not  
Too harsh to your companion yesternorn ;  
Unwillingly we spake.” “ No—not to her,”  
I answered, “ but to one of whom we spake  
Your Highness might have seemed the thing you  
say.”

“ Again ? ” she cried ; “ are you ambassadors  
From him to me ? we give you, being strange,  
A license : speak, and let the topic die.”

I stammered that I knew him—could have  
wished—  
“ Our king expects—was there no precontract—  
There is no truer-hearted—ah, you seem  
All he prefigured, and he could not see  
The bird of passage flying south but longed  
To follow : surely, if your Highness keep  
Your purport, you will shock him even to death,  
Or baser courses, children of despair.”

“ Poor boy,” she said, “ can he not read—no  
books ?  
Quoit, tennis, ball—no games ? nor deals in that  
Which men delight in, martial exercise ?  
To nurse a blind ideal, like a girl,  
Methinks he seems no better than a girl ;  
As girls were once, as we ourselves have been :  
We had our dreams ; perhaps he mixt with them :  
We touch on our dead self, nor shun to do it,  
Being other—since we learnt our meaning here,

To lift the woman's fallen divinity  
Upon an even pedestal with man."

She paused, and added with a haughtier smile  
" And as to precontracts, we move, my friend,  
At no man's beck, but know ourselves and thee,  
O Vashti, noble Vashti ! Summoned out  
She kept her state, and left the drunken king  
To brawl at Shushan underneath the palms."

" Alas ! your Highness breathes full East," I said,  
" On that which leans to you. I know the Prince,  
I prize his truth : and then how vast a work  
To assail this gray preëminence of man !  
You grant me license : might I use it ? think,  
Ere half be done, perchance your life may fail ;  
Then comes the feebler heiress of your plan,  
And takes and ruins all ; and thus your pains  
May only make that footprint upon sand  
Which old-recurring waves of prejudice  
Resmooth to nothing : might I dread that you,  
With only Fame for spouse and your great deeds  
For issue, yet may live in vain, and miss,  
Meanwhile, what every woman counts her due,  
Love, children, happiness ? "

And she exclaimed,  
" Peace, you young savage of the Northern wild !  
What ! though your Prince's love were like a God's,  
Have we not made ourself the sacrifice ?  
You are bold indeed : we are not talked to thus :  
Yet will we say for children, would they grew  
Like field-flowers everywhere ! we like them well :  
But children die ; and let me tell you, girl,  
Howe'er you babble, great deeds cannot die :  
They with the sun and moon renew their light  
Forever, blessing those that look on them :  
Children—that men may pluck them from our  
                  hearts

Kill us with pity, break us with ourselves—

O—children—there is nothing upon earth  
More miserable than she that has a son  
And sees him err : nor would we work for fame ;  
Though she perhaps might reap the applause of  
Great,  
Who learns the one *POU STO* whence after-hands  
May move the world, though she herself effect  
But little : wherefore up and act, nor shrink  
For fear our solid aim be dissipated  
By frail successors. Would, indeed, we had been,  
In lieu of many mortal flies, a race  
Of giants, living, each, a thousand years,  
That we might see our own work out, and watch  
The sandy footprint harden into stone.”

I answered nothing, doubtful in myself  
If that strange Poet-princess with her grand  
Imaginations might at all be won.  
And she broke out, interpreting my thoughts :

“ No doubt we seem a kind of monster to you :  
We are used to that ; for women, up till this  
Cramped under worse than South-sea-isle taboo,  
Dwarfs of the gynecæum, fail so far  
In high desire, they know not, cannot guess  
How much their welfare is a passion to us.  
If we could give them surer, quicker proof—  
O, if our end were less achievable  
By slow approaches than by single act  
Of immolation, any phase of death,  
We were as prompt to spring against the pikes,  
Or down the fiery gulf, as talk of it,  
To compass our dear sisters’ liberties.”

She bowed as if to veil a noble tear ;  
And up we came to where the river sloped  
To plunge in cataract, shattering on black blocks  
A breadth of thunder. O’er it shook the woods,  
And danced the color, and, below, stuck out

The bones of some vast bulk that lived and roared  
Before man was. She gazed a while and said,  
"As these rude bones to us, are we to her  
That will be." "Dare we dream of that," I asked,  
"Which wrought us, as the workman and his work  
That practice betters?" "How," she cried, "you  
love

The metaphysics! read and earn our prize,  
A golden broach: beneath an emerald plane  
Sits Diotima, teaching him that died  
Of hemlock; our device; wrought to the life;  
She rapt upon her subject, he on her:  
For there are schools for all." "And yet," I said,  
"Methinks I have not found among them all  
One anatomic." "Nay, we thought of that,"  
She answered, "but it pleased us not: in truth  
We shudder but to dream our maids should ape  
Those monstrous males that carve the living hound,  
And cram him with the fragments of the grave,  
Or in the dark dissolving human heart,  
And holy secrets of this microcosm,  
Dabbling a shameless hand with shameful jest,  
Encarnalize their spirits: yet we know  
Knowledge is knowledge, and this matter hangs:  
Howbeit ourself, foreseeing casualty,  
Nor willing men should come among us, learnt,  
For many weary moons before we came,  
This craft of healing. Were you sick, ourself  
Would tend upon you. To your question now,  
Which touches on the workman and his work.  
Let there be light, and there was light: 'tis so:  
For was, and is, and will be, are but is;  
And all creation is one act at once,  
The birth of light: but we that are not all,  
As parts, can see but parts, now this, now that,  
And live, perforce, from thought to thought, and  
make  
One act a phantom of succession: thus  
Our weakness somehow shapes the shadow, Time;



But in the shadow will we work, and mould  
The woman to the fuller day."

She spake  
With kindled eyes : we rode a league beyond,  
And o'er a bridge of pinewood crossing, came  
On flowery levels underneath the crag,  
Full of all beauty. "O how sweet," I said,  
(For I was half oblivious of my mask,)  
"To linger here with one that loved us!" "Yea,"  
She answered, "or with fair philosophies  
That lift the fancy; for indeed these fields  
Are lovely, lovelier not the Elysian lawns,  
Where paced the Demigods of old, and saw  
The soft white vapor streak the crowned towers  
Built to the Sun:" then, turning to her maids,  
"Pitch our pavilion here upon the sward;  
Lay out the viands." At the word, they raised  
A tent of satin, elaborately wrought  
With fair Corinna's triumph: here she stood,  
Engirt with many a florid maiden-check,  
The woman-conqueror; woman-conquered there  
The bearded Victor of ten thousand hymns,  
And all the men mourned at his side: but we  
Set forth to climb; then, climbing, Cyril kept  
With Psyche, with Melissa Florian, I  
With mine affianced. Many a little hand  
Glanced like a touch of sunshine on the rocks,  
Many a light foot shone like a jewel set  
In the dark crag: and then we turned, we wound  
About the cliffs, the copses, out and in,  
Hammering and clinking, chattering stony names  
Of shale and hornblende, rag and trap and tuff,  
Amygdaloid and trachyte, till the Sun  
Grew broader toward his death and fell, and all  
The rosy heights came out above the lawns.

---

The splendor falls on castle walls  
And snowy summits old in story;

The long light shakes across the lakes,  
 And the wild cataract leaps in glory.  
 Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying.  
 Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying

O hark, O hear! how thin and clear,  
 And thinner, clearer, farther going;  
 O sweet and far, from cliff and scar,  
 The horns of Elfland faintly blowing!  
 Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying:  
 Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,  
 They faint on hill or field or river:  
 Our echoes roll from soul to soul,  
 And grow forever and forever.  
 Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,  
 And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying, dying.

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#### IV.

“ THERE sinks the nebulous star we call the Sun,  
 If that hypothesis of theirs be sound,”  
 Said Ida; “let us down and rest:” and we  
 Down from the lean and wrinkled precipices,  
 By every coppice-feathered chasm and cleft,  
 Dropt through the ambrosial gloom to where below,  
 No bigger than a glow-worm, shone the tent  
 Lamp-lit from the inner. Once she leaned on me,  
 Descending; once or twice she lent her hand,  
 And blissful palpitations in the blood,  
 Stirring a sudden transport, rose and fell.

But when we planted level feet, and dipt  
 Beneath the satin dome and entered in,  
 There leaning deep in brodered down we sank  
 Our elbows: on a tripod in the midst  
 A fragrant flame rose, and before us glowed  
 Fruit, blossom, viand, amber wine and gold.

Then she, " Let some one sing to us ; lightlier  
move  
The minutes fledged with music ; " and a maid,  
Of those beside her, smote her harp, and sang.

" Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,  
Tears from the depth of some divine despair  
Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,  
In looking on the happy Autumn-fields,  
And thinking of the days that are no more.

" Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail,  
That brings our friends up from the underworld,  
Sad as the last which reddens over one  
That sinks with all we love below the verge ;  
So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.

" Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer dawns  
The earliest pipe of half-awakened birds  
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes  
The casement slowly grows a glimmering square ;  
So sad, so strange, the days that are no more.

" Dear as remembered kisses after death,  
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feigned  
On lips that are for others ; deep as love,  
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret ;  
O Death in Life, the days that are no more."

She ended with such passion that the tear,  
She sang of, shook and fell, an erring pearl  
Lost in her bosom : but with some disdain  
Answered the Princess, " If indeed there haunt  
About the mouldered lodges of the Past  
So sweet a voice and vague, fatal to men,  
Well needs it we should cram our ears with wool  
And so pace by : but thine are fancies hatched  
In silken-folded idleness ; nor is it  
Wiser to weep a true occasion lost,

But trim our sails, and let old bygones be,  
 While down the streams that float us each and all  
 To the issue, goes, like glittering bergs of ice,  
 Throne after throne, and molten on the waste  
 Becomes a cloud : for all things serve their time  
 Toward that great year of equal might and rights,  
 Nor would I fight with iron laws, in the end  
 Found golden : let the past be past ; let be  
 Their cancelled Babels : though the rough kex  
                   break

The starred mosaic, and the wild goat hang  
 Upon the shaft, and the wild fig-tree split  
 Their monstrous idols, care not while we hear  
 A trumpet in the distance pealing news  
 Of better, and Hope, a poisoning eagle, burns  
 Above the unrisen morrow : " then to me ;  
 " Know you no song of your own land," she said,  
 " Not such as moans about the retrospect,  
 But deals with the other distance and the hues  
 Of promise ; not a death's head at the wine."

Then I remembered one myself had made  
 What time I watched the swallow winging south  
 From mine own land, part made long since, and  
                   part  
 Now while I sang ; and maidenlike as far  
 As I could ape their treble, did I sing.

" O Swallow, Swallow, flying South,  
 Fly to her, and fall upon her gilded eaves.  
 And tell her, tell her what I tell to thee.

" O tell her, Swallow, thou that knowest each,  
 That bright and fierce and fickle is the South,  
 And dark and true and tender is the North.

" O Swallow, Swallow, if I could follow, and light  
 Upon her lattice, I would pipe and trill,  
 And cheep and twitter twenty million loves.

“ O were I thou that she might take me in,  
And lay me on her bosom, and her heart  
Would rock the snowy cradle till I died.

“ Why lingereth she to clothe her heart with love,  
Delaying as the tender ash delays  
To clothe herself, when all the woods are green ?

“ O tell her, Swallow, that thy brood is flown :  
Say to her, I do but wanton in the South,  
But in the North long since my nest is made.

“ O tell her, brief is life but love is long,  
And brief the sun of summer in the North,  
And brief the moon of beauty in the South.

“ O Swallow, flying from the golden woods,  
Fly to her, and pipe and woo her, and make her  
mine,  
And tell her, tell her, that I follow thee.”

I ceased, and all the ladies, each at each,  
Like the Ithacensian suitors in old time,  
Stared with great eyes, and laughed with alien lips,  
And knew not what they meant ; for still my voice  
Rang false : but smiling, “ Not for thee,” she said,  
“ O Bulbul, any rose of Gulistan  
Shall burst her veil : marsh-divers, rather, maid,  
Shall croak thee sister, or the meadow-crake  
Grate her harsh kindred in the grass : and this  
A mere love-poem ! O for such, my friend,  
We hold them slight : they mind us of the time  
When we made bricks in Egypt. Knaves are men,  
That lute and flute fantastic tenderness,  
And dress the victim to the offering up,  
And paint the gates of Hell with Paradise,  
And play the slave to gain the tyranny.  
Poor soul ! I had a maid of honor once ;  
She wept her true eyes blind for such a one,

A rogue of canzonets and serenades.  
 I loved her. Peace be with her. She is dead.  
 So they blaspheme the muse ! but great is song  
 Used to great ends : ourself have often tried  
 Valkyrian hymns, or into rhythm have dashed  
 The passion of the prophetess : for song  
 Is duer unto freedom, force, and growth  
 Of spirit, than to junketing and love.  
 Love is it ? Would this same mock-love and this  
 Mock-Hymen were laid up like winter bats,  
 Till all men grew to rate us at our worth,  
 Not vassals to be beat, nor pretty babes  
 To be dandled, no, but living wills, and sphered  
 Whole in ourselves, and owed to none. Enough !  
 But now to leaven play with profit, you,  
 Know you no song, the true growth of your soil,  
 That gives the manners of your countrywomen ? ”

She spoke, and turned her sumptuous head with  
 eyes  
 Of shining expectation fixt on mine.  
 Then while I dragged my brains for such a song,  
 Cyril, with whom the bell-mouthed flask had  
 wrought,  
 Or mastered by the sense of sport, began  
 To troll a careless, careless tavern-catch  
 Of Moll and Meg, and strange experiences  
 Unmeet for ladies. Florian nodded at him,  
 I frowning ; Psyche flushed and wanned and shook ;  
 The lily-like Melissa drooped her brows ;  
 “ Forbear,” the Princess cried ; “ Forbear, Sir,” I ;  
 And heated through and through with wrath and  
 love,  
 I smote him on the breast ; he started up ;  
 There rose a shriek as of a city sacked ;  
 Melissa clamored, “ Flee the death ! ” “ To horse ! ”  
 Said Ida ; “ home ! to horse ! ” and fled, as flies  
 A troop of snowy doves athwart the dusk,  
 When some one batters at the dovecote doors,

Disorderly the women. Alone I stood  
With Florian, cursing Cyril, vext at heart,  
In the pavilion : there like parting hopes  
I heard them passing from me : hoof by hoof,  
And every hoof a knell to my desires,  
Clanged on the bridge ; and then another shriek,  
“ The Head, the Head, the Princess, oh the Head ! ”  
For blind with rage she missed the plank, and  
rolled

In the river. Out I sprang from glow to gloom :  
There whirled her white robe like a blossomed  
branch

Rapt to the horrible fall : a glance I gave,  
No more ; but woman-vested as I was,  
Plunged ; and the flood drew ; yet I caught her ;  
then

Oaring one arm, and bearing in my left  
The weight of all the hopes of half the world,  
Strove to buffet to land in vain. A tree  
Was half-disrooted from his place, and stooped  
To drench his dark locks in the gurgling wave  
Mid-channel. Right on this we drove and caught,  
And grasping down the boughs I gained the shore.

There stood her maidens glimmeringly grouped  
In the hollow bank. One reaching forward drew  
My burthen from mine arms ; they cried “ She  
lives ! ”

They bore her back into the tent ; but I,  
So much a kind of shame within me wrought,  
Not yet endured to meet her opening eyes,  
Nor found my friends ; but pushed alone on foot  
(For since her horse was lost I left her mine)  
Across the woods, and less from Indian craft  
Than beelike instinct hiveward, found at length  
The garden portals. Two great statues, Art  
And Science, Caryatids, lifted up  
A weight of emblem, and betwixt were valves  
Of open-work in which the hunter rued

His rash intrusion, manlike, but his brows  
 Had sprouted, and the branches thereupon  
 Spread out at top, and grimly spiked the gates.

A little space was left between the horns,  
 Through which I clambered o'er at top with pain,  
 Dropt on the sward, and up the linden walks,  
 And, tost on thoughts that changed from hue to hue,  
 Now poring on the glow-worm, now the star,  
 I paced the terrace, till the bear had wheeled  
 Through a great arc his seven slow suns.

A step

Of lightest echo, then a loftier form  
 Than female, moving through the uncertain gloom,  
 Disturbed me with the doubt "if this were she,"  
 But it was Florian. "Hist, O hist," he said,  
 "They seek us: out so late is out of rules.  
 Moreover, 'seize the strangers' is the cry.  
 How came you here?" I told him. "I," said he,  
 "Last of the train, a moral leper, I,  
 To whom none spake, half-sick at heart, returned.  
 Arriving all confused among the rest,  
 With hooded brows I crept into the hall,  
 And, couched behind a Judith, underneath  
 The head of Holofernes peeped and saw.  
 Girl after girl was called to trial: each  
 Disclaimed all knowledge of us: last of all,  
 Melissa: trust me, Sir, I pitied her.  
 She, questioned if she knew us men, at first  
 Was silent; closer prest, denied it not:  
 And then, demanded if her mother knew,  
 Or Psyche, she affirmed not, or denied:  
 From whence the Royal mind, familiar with her,  
 Easily gathered either guilt. She sent  
 For Psyche, but she was not there; she called  
 For Psyche's child to cast it from the doors;  
 She sent for Blanche to accuse her face to face;  
 And I slept out: but whither will you now?



And where are Psyche, Cyril ? both are fled.  
What, if together ? that were not so well.  
Would rather we had never come ! I dread  
His wildness, and the chances of the dark."

" And yet," I said, " you wrong him more than I  
That struck him : this is proper to the clown,  
Though smocked, or furred and purpled, still the  
clown,  
To harm the thing that trusts him, and to shame  
That which he says he loves : for Cyril, howe'er  
He deal in frolic, as to-night—the song  
Might have been worse and sinned in grosser lips  
Beyond all pardon—as it is, I hold  
These flashes on the surface are not he.  
He has a solid base of temperament :  
But as the water-lily starts and slides,  
Upon the level in little puffs of wind,  
Though anchored to the bottom, such is he."

Scarce had I ceased, when from a tamarisk near  
Two Proctors leapt upon us, crying, " Names."  
He, standing still, was clutched ; but I began  
To thrid the musky-circled mazes, wind  
And double in and out the boles, and race  
By all the fountains : fleet I was of foot :  
Before me showered the rose in flakes ; behind  
I heard the puffed pursuer ; at mine ear  
Bubbled the nightingale and heeded not,  
And secret laughter tickled all my soul.  
At last I hooked my ankle in a vine,  
That claspt the feet of a Mnemosyne,  
And falling on my face was caught and known.

They haled us to the Princess, where she sat  
High in the hall : above her drooped a lamp,  
And made the single jewel on her brow  
Burn like the mystic fire on a mast-head,  
Prophet of storm : a handmaid on each side

Rowed toward her, combing out her long black hair  
Damp from the river ; and close behind her stood  
Eight daughters of the plough, stronger than men,  
Huge women, blowzed with health, and wind, and  
rain,  
And labor. Each was like a Druid rock ;  
Or like a spire of land that stands apart  
Cleft from the main, and wailed about with mews.

Then, as we came, the crowd dividing clove  
An advent to the throne ; and there beside,  
Half-naked as if caught at once from bed,  
And tumbled on the purple footcloth, lay  
The lily-shining child ; and on the left,  
Bowed on her palms and folded up from wrong,  
Her round white shoulder shaken with her sobs,  
Melissa knelt ; but Lady Blanche, erect,  
Stood up and spake, an affluent orator.

“ It was not thus, oh Princess, in old days :  
You prized my counsel, lived upon my lips :  
I led you then to all the Castalies ;  
I fed you with the milk of every Muse ;  
I loved you like this kneeler, and you me,  
Your second mother : those were gracious times.  
Then came your new friend : you began to change—  
I saw it and grieved—to slacken and to cool ;  
Till taken with her seeming openness  
You turned your warmer currents all to her,  
To me you froze : this was my meed for all.  
Yet I bore up in part from ancient love,  
And partly that I hoped to win you back,  
And partly conscious of my own deserts,  
And partly that you were my civil head,  
And chiefly you were born for something great  
In which I might your fellow-worker be,  
When time should serve ; and thus a noble scheme  
Grew up from seed we two long since had sown :  
In us true growth, in her a Jonah’s gourd,

Up in one night and due to sudden sun :  
We took this palace ; but even from the first  
You stood in your own light and darkened mine.  
What student came but that you planed her path  
To Lady Psyche, younger, not so wise,  
A foreigner, and I your countrywoman,  
I your old friend and tried, she new in all ?  
But still her lists were swelled and mine were lean ;  
Yet I bore up, in hope she would be known :  
Then came these wolves : *they* knew her : *they*  
endured,

Long-closeted with her the yestermorn,  
To tell her what they were, and she to hear :  
And me none told : not less to an eye like mine,  
A lidless watcher of the public weal,  
Last night, their mask was patent, and my foot  
Was to you : but I thought again : I feared  
To meet a cold ' We thank you, we shall hear of it  
From Lady Psyche : ' you had gone to her,  
She told, perforce ; and winning easy grace,  
No doubt for slight delay, remained among us  
In our young nursery still unknown, the stem  
Less grain than touchwood, while my honest heat  
Were all miscounted as malignant haste  
To push my rival out of place and power.  
But public use required she should be known ;  
And since my oath was ta'en for public use,  
I broke the letter of it to keep the sense.  
I spoke not then at first, but watched them well,  
Saw that they kept apart, no mischief done ;  
And yet this day (though you should hate me for  
it)

I came to tell you ; found that you had gone,  
Ridden to the hills, she likewise : now, I thought,  
That surely she will speak ; if not, then I.  
Did she ? these monsters blazoned what they were,  
According to the coarseness of their kind,  
For thus I hear ; and known at last (my work)  
And full of cowardice and guilty shame,

(I grant in her some sense of shame,) she flies ;  
 And I remain on whom to wreak your rage,  
 I, that have lent my life to build up yours,  
 I, that have wasted here health, wealth and time  
 And talents, I—you know it—I will not boast :  
 Dismiss me, and I prophesy your plan,  
 Divorced from my experience, will be chaff  
 For every gust of chance, and men will say  
 We did not know the real light, but chased  
 The wisp that flickers where no foot can tread.”

She ceased : the Princess answered coldly, “ Good :  
 Your oath is broken : we dismiss you : go.  
 For this lost lamb (she pointed to the child)  
 Our mind is changed : we take it to ourselves.”

Thereat the Lady stretched a vulture throat,  
 And shot from crooked lips a haggard smile.  
 “ The plan was mine. I built the nest,” she said,  
 “ To hatch the cuckoo. Rise !” and stooped to  
 updrag

Melissa : she, half on her mother propt,  
 Half-drooping from her, turned her face, and cast  
 A liquid look on Ida, full of prayer,  
 Which melted Florian’s fancy as she hung,  
 A Niobëan daughter, one arm out,  
 Appealing to the bolts of Heaven ; and while  
 We gazed upon her came a little stir  
 About the doors, and on a sudden rushed  
 Among us, out of breath, as one pursued,  
 A woman-post in flying raiment. Fear  
 Stared in her eyes, and chalked her face, and  
 winged

Her transit to the throne, whereby she fell  
 Delivering sealed despatches, which the Head  
 Took half-amazed, and in her lion’s mood  
 Tore open, silent we with blind surmise  
 Regarding, while she read, till over brow  
 And cheek and bosom brake the wrathful bloom  
 As of some fire against a stormy cloud,

When the wild peasant rights himself, the rick  
 Flames, and his anger reddens in the heavens ;  
 For anger most it seemed, while now her breast,  
 Beaten with some great passion at her heart,  
 Palpitated, her hand shook, and we heard  
 In the dead hush the papers that she held  
 Rustle : at once the lost lamb at her feet  
 Sent out a bitter bleating for its dam ;  
 The plaintive cry jarred on her ire ; she crushed  
 The scrolls together, made a sudden turn  
 As if to speak, but, utterance failing her,  
 She whirled them on to me, as who should say  
 " Read," and I read—two letters—one her sire's.

" Fair daughter, when we sent the Prince your  
 way  
 We knew not your ungracious laws, which learnt,  
 We, conscious of what temper you are built,  
 Came all in haste to hinder wrong, but fell  
 Into his father's hands, who has this night,  
 You lying close upon his territory,  
 Slipt round and in the dark invested you,  
 And here he keeps me hostage for his son."

The second was my father's, running thus :  
 " You have our son : touch not a hair of his head :  
 Render him up unscathed : give him your hand :  
 Cleave to your contract : though indeed we hear  
 You hold the woman is the better man ;  
 A rampant heresy, such as if it spread  
 Would make all women kick against their Lords  
 Through all the world, and which might well deserve  
 That we this night should pluck your palace down ;  
 And we will do it, unless you send us back  
 Our son, on the instant, whole."

So far I read ;

And then stood up and spoke impetuously.

" O not to pry and peer on your reserve,  
 But led by golden wishes and a hope

The child of regal compact, did I break  
 Your precinct ; not a scorner of your sex  
 But venerator, zealous it should be  
 All that it might be : hear me, for I bear,  
 Though man, yet human, whatsoe'er your wrongs,  
 From the flaxen curl to the gray lock a life  
 Less mine than yours : my nurse would tell me of  
 you ;

I babbled for you, as babies for the moon,  
 Vague brightness ; when a boy, you stooped to me  
 From all high places, lived in all fair lights,  
 Came in long breezes rapt from inmost south,  
 And blown to inmost north ; at eve and dawn  
 With Ida, Ida, Ida, rang the woods ;  
 The leader wild-swan in among the stars  
 Would clang it, and lapt in wreaths of glow-worm  
 light

The mellow breaker murmured Ida. Now,  
 Because I would have reached you, had you been  
 Sphered up with Cassiopëia, or the enthroned  
 Persephone in Hades, now at length,  
 Those winters of abeyance all worn out,  
 A man I came to see you : but, indeed,  
 Not in this frequency can I lend full tongue,  
 O noble Ida, to those thoughts that wait  
 On you, their centre : let me say but this,  
 That many a famous man and woman, town  
 And landskip, have I heard of, after seen  
 The dwarfs of presage ; though when known, there  
 grew

Another kind of beauty in detail  
 Made them worth knowing ; but in you I found  
 My boyish dream involved and dazzled down  
 And mastered, while that after-beauty makes  
 Such head from act to act, from hour to hour,  
 Within me, that except you slay me here,  
 According to your bitter statute-book,  
 I cannot cease to follow you as they say  
 The seal does music ; who desire you more

Than growing boys their manhood ; dying lips,  
With many thousand matters left to do,  
The breath of life ; oh, more than poor men wealth,  
Than sick men health—yours, yours, not mine—but  
half

Without you, with you, whole ; and of those halves  
You worthiest ; and howe'er you block and bar  
Your heart with system out from mine, I hold  
That it becomes no man to nurse despair,  
But in the teeth of clenched antagonisms  
To follow up the worthiest till he die :  
Yet that I came not all unauthorized,  
Behold your father's letter."

On one knee  
Kneeling, I gave it, which she caught, and dashed  
Unopened at her feet : a tide of fierce  
Invective seemed to wait behind her lips,  
As waits a river level with the dam  
Ready to burst and flood the world with foam :  
And so she would have spoken, but there rose  
A hubbub in the court of half the maids  
Gathered together ; from the illumined hall  
Long lanes of splendor slanted o'er a press  
Of snowy shoulders, thick as herded ewes,  
And rainbow robes, and gems and gemlike eyes,  
And gold and golden heads ; they to and fro  
Fluctuated, as flowers in storm, some red, some pale,  
All open-mouthed, all gazing to the light,  
Some crying there was an army in the land.  
And some that men were in the very walls,  
And some they cared not ; till a clamor grew  
As of a new-world Babel, woman-built,  
And worse-confounded : high above them stood  
The placid marble Muses, looking peace.

Not peace, she looked, the Head : but rising up  
Robed in the long night of her deep hair, so  
To the open window moved, remaining there

Fixt like a beacon-tower above the waves  
Of tempest, when the crimson-rolling eye  
Glares ruin, and the wild birds on the light  
Dash themselves dead. She stretched her arms  
and called  
Across the tumult, and the tumult fell :

“ What fear ye, brawlers ? am not I your Head ?  
On me, me, me, the storm first breaks : *I* dare  
All these male thunderbolts : what is it ye fear ?  
Peace ! there are those to avenge us, and they  
come :

If not,—myself were like enough, oh girls,  
To unfurl the maiden banner of our rights,  
And clad in iron burst the ranks of war,  
Or, falling, protomartyr of our cause,  
Die : yet I blame ye not so much for fear ;  
Six thousand years of fear have made ye that  
From which I would redeem ye : but for those  
That stir this hubbub—you and you—I know  
Your faces there in the crowd—to-morrow morn  
We hold a great convention : then shall they  
That love their voices more than duty, learn  
With whom they deal, dismissed in shame to live  
No wiser than their mothers, household stuff,  
Live chattels, mincers of each other's fame,  
Full of weak poison, turnspits for the clown,  
The drunkard's football, laughing-stocks of Time,  
Whose brains are in their hands and in their heels,  
But fit to flaunt, to dress, to dance, to thrum,  
To tramp, to scream, to burnish, and to scour,  
Forever slaves at home and fools abroad ! ”

She, ending, waved her hands : thereat the crowd  
Muttering, dissolved : then with a smile, that looked  
A stroke of cruel sunshine on the cliff  
When all the glens are drowned in azure gloom  
Of thunder-shower, she floated to us and said :



“ You have done well and like a gentleman,  
And like a prince : you have our thanks for all :  
And you look well too in your woman’s dress :  
Well have you done, and like a gentleman.  
You saved our life : we owe you bitter thanks :  
Better have died and spilt our bones in the flood—  
Then men had said—but now—What hinders me  
To take such bloody vengeance on you both ?—  
Yet since our father—Wasps in our good hive,  
You would-be quenchers of the light to be,  
Barbarians, grosser than your native bears—  
O would I had his sceptre for one hour !  
You that have dared to break our bound, and gulled  
Our servants, wronged and lied and thwarted us—  
*I wed with thee ! I bound by precontract*  
Your bride, your bondslave ! not though all the  
gold  
That veins the world were packed to make your  
crown,  
And every spoken tongue should lord you ! Sir,  
Your falsehood and yourself are hateful to us :  
I trample on your offers and on you :  
Begone ! we will not look upon you more.  
Here, push them out at gates ! ”

In wrath she spake.

Then those eight mighty daughters of the plough  
Bent their broad faces toward us and addressed  
Their motion : twice I sought to plead my cause,  
But on my shoulder hung their heavy hands,  
The weight of destiny : so from her face  
They pushed us, down the steps, and through the  
court,  
And with grim laughter thrust us out at gates.

We crossed the street, and gained a petty mound  
Beyond it, whence we saw the lights and heard  
The voices murmuring. While I listened came  
On a sudden the weird seizure and the doubt :  
I seemed to move among a world of ghosts ;

The Princess with her monstrous woman-guard,  
 The jest and earnest working side by side,  
 The cataract, and the tumult, and the kings  
 Were shadows; and the long fantastic night  
 With all its doings had and had not been,  
 And all things were and were not.

This went by

As strangely as it came, and on my spirits  
 Settled a gentle cloud of melancholy;  
 Not long; I shook it off; for spite of doubts  
 And sudden ghostly shadowings I was one  
 To whom the touch of all mischance but came  
 As night to him that sitting on a hill  
 Sees the midsummer, midnight, Norway sun,  
 Set into sunrise: then we moved away.

---

Thy voice is heard through rolling drums  
 That beat to battle where he stands;  
 Thy face across his fancy comes,  
 And gives the battle to his hands:  
 A moment, while the trumpets blow,  
 He sees his brood about thy knee;  
 The next, like fire he meets the foe,  
 And strikes him dead for thine and thee.

So Lilia sang: we thought her half-possessed,  
 She struck such warbling fury through the words  
 And, after, feigning pique at what she called  
 The raillery, or grotesque, or false sublime—  
 Like one that wishes at a dance to change  
 The music—clapt her hands and cried for war,  
 Or some grand fight to kill and make an end:  
 And he that next inherited the tale,  
 Half turning to the broken statue, said,  
 "Sir Ralph has got your colors: if I prove  
 Your knight and fight your battle, what for me?"  
 It chanced her empty glove upon the tomb  
 Lay by her like a model of her hand.  
 She took it and she flung it. "Fight," she said,

“ And make us all we would be, great and good.”  
He knightlike in his cap instead of casque,  
A cap of Tyrol borrowed from the hall,  
Arranged the favor and assumed the Prince.

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## V.

Now scarce three paces measured from the mound  
We stumbled on a stationary voice,  
And “ Stand, who goes ? ” “ Two from the palace,” I.  
“ The second two : they wait,” he said, “ pass on ;  
His Highness wakes : ” and one, that clashed in arms  
By glimmering lanes and walls of canvas, led  
Threading the soldier-city, till we heard  
The drowsy folds of our great ensign shake  
From blazoned lions o’er the imperial tent  
Whispers of war.

Entering, the sudden light  
Dazed me half-blind : I stood and seemed to hear,  
As in a poplar grove when a light wind wakes  
A lisp of the innumerable leaf and dies,  
Each hissing in his neighbor’s ear ; and then  
A strangled titter, out of which there brake  
On all sides, clamoring etiquette to death,  
Unmeasured mirth ; while now the two old kings  
Began to wag their baldness up and down,  
The fresh young captains flashed their glittering  
teeth ;  
The huge bush-bearded Barons heaved and blew,  
And slain with laughter rolled the gilded Squire.

At length my Sire, his rough cheek wet with  
tears,  
Panted from weary sides, “ King, you are free !  
We did but keep you surety for our son,

If this be he,—or a draggled mawkin, thou,  
 That tends her bristled grunterns in the sludge : ”  
 For I was drenched with ooze, and torn with briers,  
 More crumpled than a poppy from the sheath,  
 And all one rag, disprined from head to heel :  
 Then some one sent beneath his vaulted palm  
 A whispered jest to some one near him, “ Look,  
 He has been among his shadows.” “ Satan take  
 The old women and their shadows ! (thus the king  
 Roared) make yourself a man to fight with men.  
 Go : Cyril told us all.”

As boys that slink  
 From ferule and the trespass-chiding eye,  
 Away we stole, and transient in a trice  
 From what was left of faded woman-slough  
 To sheathing splendors and the golden scale  
 Of harness, issued in the sun that now  
 Leapt from the dewy shoulders of the Earth,  
 And hit the northern hills. Here Cyril met us,  
 A little shy at first, but by and by  
 We twain, with mutual pardon asked and given  
 For stroke and song, resoldered peace, whereon  
 Followed his tale. Amazed he fled away  
 Through the dark land, and later in the night  
 Had come on Psyche weeping : “ then we fell  
 Into your father’s hand, and there she lies,  
 But will not speak, nor stir.”

He showed a tent  
 A stone-shot off : we entered in, and there  
 Among piled arms and rough accoutrements,  
 Pitiful sight, wrapt in a soldier’s cloak,  
 Like some sweet sculpture draped from head to  
 foot,  
 And pushed by rude hands from its pedestal,  
 All her fair length upon the ground she lay :  
 And at her head a follower of the camp,  
 A charred and wrinkled piece of womanhood,  
 Sat watching like a watcher by the dead.

Then Florian knelt, and "Come," he whispered to her,

"Lift up your head, sweet sister: lie not thus.  
What have you done but right? you could not slay  
Me, nor your prince: look up: be comforted:  
Sweet is it to have done the thing one ought,  
When fallen in darker ways." And likewise I:  
"Be comforted: have I not lost her too,  
In whose least act abides the nameless charm  
That none has else for me." She heard, she moved,  
She moaned, a folded voice; and up she sat,  
And raised the cloak from brows as pale and smooth  
As those that mourn half-shrouded over death  
In deathless marble, "Her," she said, "my  
friend—

Parted from her—betrayed her cause and mine—  
Where shall I breathe? why kept ye not your  
faith?

O base and bad! what comfort? none for me!"  
To whom remorseful Cyril, "Yet I pray  
Take comfort: live, dear lady, for your child,"  
At which she lifted up her voice and cried.

"Ah me, my babe, my blossom, ah my child,  
My one sweet child, whom I shall see no more!  
For now will cruel Ida keep her back;  
And either she will die from want of care,  
Or sicken with ill usage, when they say  
The child is hers—for every little fault,  
The child is hers; and they will beat my girl,  
Remembering her mother: oh my flower!  
Or they will take her, they will make her hard,  
And she will pass me by in after-life  
With some cold reverence worse than were she  
dead.

Ill mother that I was to leave her there,  
To lag behind, scared by the cry they made,  
The horror of the shame among them all:  
But I will go and sit beside the doors,

And make a wild petition night and day,  
 Until they hate to hear me like a wind  
 Wailing forever, till they open to me,  
 And lay my little blossom at my feet,  
 My babe, my sweet Aglaïa, my one child:  
 And I will take her up and go my way,  
 And satisfy my soul with kissing her:  
 Ah! what might that man not deserve of me,  
 Who gave me back my child?" "Be comforted,"  
 Said Cyril, "you shall have it:" but again  
 She veiled her brows, and prone she sank, and so  
 Like tender things that being caught feign death,  
 Spoke not, nor stirred.

By this a murmur ran  
 Through all the camp, and inward raced the scouts  
 With rumor of Prince Arac hard at hand.  
 We left her by the woman, and without  
 Found the gray kings at parle: and "Look you,"  
 cried

My father, "that our compact be fulfilled:  
 You have spoilt this child; she laughs at you and  
 man:

She wrongs herself, her sex, and me, and him.  
 But red-faced war has rods of steel and fire;  
 She yields, or war."

Then Gama turned to me:  
 "We fear, indeed, you spent a stormy time  
 With our strange girl: and yet they say that still  
 You love her. Give us, then, your mind at large:  
 How say you, war or not?"

"Not war, if possible,  
 O King," I said, "lest from the abuse of war,  
 The desecrated shrine, the trampled year,  
 The smouldering homestead, and the household  
 flower

Torn from the lintel—all the common wrong—  
 A smoke go up through which I loom to her

Three times a monster : now she lightens scorn  
 At him that mars her plan, but then would hate  
 (And every voice she talked with ratify it,  
 And every face she looked on justify it)  
 The general foe. More soluble is this knot  
 By gentleness than war. I want her love.  
 What were I nigher this, although we dashed  
 Your cities into shards with catapults ;  
 She would not love ;—or brought her chained, a  
     slave,  
 The lifting of whose eyelash is my lord,  
 Not ever would she love ; but brooding turn  
 The book of scorn, till all my little chance  
 Were caught within the record of her wrongs,  
 And crushed to death ; and rather, Sire, than this,  
 I would the old God of war himself were dead,  
 Forgotten, rusting on his iron hills,  
 Rotting on some wild shore with ribs of wreck,  
 Or like an old-world mammoth bulked in ice,  
 Not to be molten out.”

And roughly spake  
 My father, “ Tut, you know them not, the girls.  
 Boy, when I hear you prate I almost think  
 That idiot legend credible. Look you, Sir !  
 Man is the hunter ; woman is his game ;  
 The sleek and shining creatures of the chase,  
 We hunt them for the beauty of their skins ;  
 They love us for it, and we ride them down.  
 Wheedling and siding with them ! Out ! for shame !  
 Boy, there’s no rose that’s half so dear to them  
 As he that does the thing they dare not do,  
 Breathing and sounding beauteous battle, comes  
 With the air of the trumpet round him, and leaps in  
 Among the women, snares them by the score,  
 Flattered and flustered, wins, though dashed with  
     death  
 He reddens what he kisses ; thus I won  
 Your mother, a good mother, a good wife,

Worth winning ; but this firebrand--gentleness  
 To such as her ! if Cyril spake her true,  
 To catch a dragon in a cherry net,  
 To trip a tigress with a gossamer,  
 Were wisdom to it."

"Yea, but Sire," I cried,  
 "Wild natures need wise curbs. The soldier ?

No :

What dares not Ida do that she should prize  
 The soldier ? I beheld her, when she rose  
 The yesternight, and storming in extremes  
 Stood for her cause, and flung defiance down  
 Gagelike to man and had not shunned the death,  
 No, not the soldier's : yet I hold her, King,  
 True woman : but you clash them all in one,  
 That have as many differences as we.  
 The violet varies from the lily as far  
 As oak from elm : one loves the soldier, one  
 The silken priest of peace, one this, one that,  
 And some unworthily ; their sinless faith,  
 A maiden moon that sparkles on a sty,  
 Glorifying clown and satyr ; whence they need  
 More breadth of culture : is not Ida right ?  
 They worth it ? truer to the law within ?  
 Severer in the logic of a life ?  
 Twice as magnetic to sweet influences  
 Of Earth and Heaven ? and she of whom you  
 speak,

My mother, looks as whole as some serene  
 Creation minted in the golden moods  
 Of sovereign artists ; not a thought, a touch,  
 But pure as lines of green that streak the white  
 Of the first snowdrop's inner leaves ; I say  
 Not like the piebald miscellany, man,  
 Bursts of great heart and slips in sensual mire,  
 But whole and one : and take them all-in-all,  
 Were we ourselves but half as good, as kind,  
 As truthful, much that Ida claims as right  
 Had ne'er been mooted, but as frankly theirs



As dues of Nature. To our point: not war:  
Lest I lose all."

"Nay, nay, you spake but sense,"  
Said Gama. "We remember love ourselves  
In our sweet youth: we did not rate him then  
This red-hot iron to be shaped with blows.  
You talk almost like Ida: she can talk;  
And there is something in it as you say:  
But you talk kindlier: we esteem you for it.—  
He seems a gracious and a gallant prince,  
I would he had our daughter: for the rest,  
Our own detention, why the causes weighed,  
Fatherly fears—you used us courteously—  
We would do much to gratify your Prince—  
We pardon it; and for your ingress here  
Upon the skirt and fringe of our fair land,  
You did but come as goblins in the night,  
Nor in the furrow broke the ploughman's head,  
Nor burnt the grange, nor bussed the milking-maid,  
Nor robbed the farmer of his bowl of cream:  
But let your Prince (our royal word upon it,  
He comes back safe) ride with us to our lines,  
And speak with Arac: Arac's word is thrice  
As ours with Ida: something may be done—  
I know not what—and ours shall see us friends.  
You, likewise, our late guests, if so you will,  
Follow us: who knows? we four may build some plan  
Foursquare to opposition."

Here he reached  
White hands of farewell to my sire, who growled  
An answer which, half-muffled in his beard,  
Let so much out as gave us leave to go.

Then rode we with the old king across the lawns  
Beneath huge trees, a thousand rings of Spring  
In every bole, a song on every spray  
Of birds that piped their Valentines, and woke

Desire in me to infuse my tale of love  
In the old king's ears, who promised help, and  
oozed

All o'er with honeyed answer as we rode;  
And blossom-fragrant slipt the heavy dews,  
Gathered by night and peace, with each light air  
On our mailed heads: but other thoughts than  
Peace

Burnt in us, when we saw the embattled squares,  
And squadrons of the Prince, trampling the flowers  
With clamor: for among them rose a cry  
As if to greet the king; they made a halt;  
The horses yelled; they clashed their arms; the  
drum

Beat; merrily-blowing shrilled the martial fife;  
And in the blast and bray of the long horn  
And serpent-throated bugle, undulated  
The banner: anon to meet us lightly pranced  
Three captains out; nor ever had I seen  
Such thews of men: the midmost and the highest  
Was Arac: all about his motion clung  
The shadow of his sister, as the beam  
Of the East, that played upon them, made them  
glance

Like those three stars of the airy Giant's zone,  
That glitter burnished by the frosty dark;  
And as the fiery Sirius alters hue,  
And bickers into red and emerald, shone  
Their morions, washed with morning, as they came.

And I that prated peace, when first I heard  
War-music, felt the blind wild beast of force  
Whose home is in the sinews of a man  
Stir in me as to strike; then took the king  
His three broad sons; with now a wandering hand  
And now a pointed finger, told them all:  
A common light of smiles at our disguise  
Broke from their lips, and, ere the windy jest  
Had labored down within his ample lungs,

The genial giant, Arac, rolled himself  
Thrice in the saddle, then burst out in words.

“ Our land invaded, 'sdeath ! and he himself  
Your captive, yet my father wills not war :  
And, 'sdeath ! myself, what care I, war or no ?  
But then this question of your troth remains ;  
And there's a downright honest meaning in her ;  
She flies too high, she flies too high ! and yet  
She asked but space and fair play for her scheme ;  
She prest and prest it on me—I myself,  
What know I of these things ? but, life and soul.  
I thought her half right talking of her wrongs ;  
I say she flies too high, 'sdeath ! what of that ?  
I take her for the flower of womankind,  
And so I often told her, right or wrong,  
And, Prince, she can be sweet to those she loves,  
And, right or wrong, I care not : this is all,  
I stand upon her side : she made me swear it—  
'Sdeath !—and with solemn rites by candle-light—  
Swear by St. something—I forget her name—  
Her that talked down the fifty wisest men ;  
She was a princess too ; and so I swore.  
Come, this is all ; she will not : waive your claim :  
If not, the foughten field, what else, at once  
Decides it, 'sdeath ! against my father's will.”

I lagged in answer, loth to render up  
My precontract, and loth by brainless war  
To cleave the rift of difference deeper yet ;  
Till one of those two brothers, half aside  
And fingering at the hair about his lip,  
To prick us on to combat, “ Like to like !  
The woman's garment hid the woman's heart.”  
A taunt that clenched his purpose like a blow !  
For fiery-short was Cyril's counter-scoff,  
And sharp I answered, touched upon the point  
Where idle boys are cowards to their shame,  
“ Decide it here : why not ? we are three to three.”

Then spake the third, "But three to three! no more?

No more, and in our noble sister's cause?  
More, more, for honor: every captain waits  
Hungry for honor, angry for his king.  
More, more, some fifty on a side, that each  
May breathe himself, and quick! by overthrow  
Of these or those, the question settled, die."

"Yea," answered I, "for this wild wreath of air,  
This flake of rainbow flying on the highest  
Foam of men's deeds—this honor, if ye will.  
It needs must be for honor if at all:  
Since, what decision? if we fail, we fail,  
And if we win, we fail: she would not keep  
Her compact." "'Sdeath! but we will send to  
her,"

Said Arac; "worthy reasons why she should  
Bide by this issue: let our missive through,  
And you shall have her answer by the word."

"Boys!" shrieked the old king, but vainlier than  
a hen

To her false daughters in the pool; for none  
Regarded; neither seemed there more to say:  
Back rode we to my father's camp, and found  
He thrice had sent a herald to the gates,  
To learn if Ida yet would cede our claim,  
Or by denial flush her babbling wells  
With her own people's life: three times he went:  
The first, he blew and blew, but none appeared.  
He battered at the doors; none came: the next,  
An awful voice within had warned him thence:  
The third, and those eight daughters of the plough  
Came sallying through the gates, and caught his  
hair,

And so belabored him on rib and cheek  
They made him wild: not less one glance he caught  
Through open doors of Ida stationed there

Unshaken, clinging to her purpose, firm  
Though compassed by two armies and the noise  
Of arms ; and standing like a stately pine  
Set in a cataract on an island-crag,  
When storm is on the heights, and right and left  
Sucked from the dark heart of the long hills roll  
The torrents, dashed to the vale : and yet her will  
Bred will in me to overcome it or fall.

But when I told the king that I was pledged  
To fight in tourney for my bride, he clashed  
His iron palms together with a cry ;  
Himself would tilt it out among the lads :  
But overborne by all his bearded lords  
With reasons drawn from age and state, perforce  
He yielded, wroth and red, with fierce demur :  
And many a bold knight started up in heat,  
And swore to combat for my claim till death.

All on this side the palace ran the field  
Flat to the garden-wall : and likewise here,  
Above the garden's glowing blossom-belts,  
A columned entry shone and marble stairs,  
And great bronze valves, embossed with Tomyris  
And what she did to Cyrus after fight,  
But now fast barred : so here upon the flat  
All that long morn the lists were hammered up,  
And all that morn the heralds to and fro,  
With message and defiance, went and came ;  
Last, Ida's answer, in a royal hand,  
But shaken here and there, and rolling words  
Oration-like. I kissed it and I read.

“ O brother, you have known the pangs we felt,  
What heats of indignation, when we heard  
Of those that iron-cramped their women's feet ;  
Of lands in which at the altar the poor bride  
Gives her harsh groom for bridal-gift a scourge ;  
Of living hearts that crack within the fire

Where smoulder their dead despots ; and of those,—  
 Mothers,—that, all prophetic pity, fling  
 Their pretty maids in the running flood, and swoops  
 The vulture, beak and talon, at the heart  
 Made for all noble motion : and I saw  
 That equal baseness lived in sleeker times  
 With smoother men : the old leaven leavened all :  
 Millions of throats would bawl for civil rights,  
 No woman named : therefore I set my face  
 Against all men and lived but for mine own.  
 Far off from men I built a fold for them :  
 I stored it full of rich memorial :  
 I fenced it round with gallant institutes,  
 And biting laws to scare the beasts of prey,  
 And prospered ; till a rout of saucy boys  
 Brake on us at our books, and marred our peace,  
 Masked like our maids, blustering I know not what  
 Of insolence and love, some pretext held  
 Of baby troth, invalid, since my will  
 Sealed not the bond—the striplings!—for their  
 sport !

I tamed my leopards : shall I not tame these ?  
 Or you ? or I ? for since you think me touched  
 In honor—what, I would not aught of false—  
 Is not our cause pure ? and whereas I know  
 Your prowess, Arac, and what mother's blood  
 You draw from, fight ; you failing, I abide  
 What end soever, fail you will not. Still  
 Take not his life : he risked it for my own ;  
 His mother lives : yet whatsoe'er you do,  
 Fight and fight well ; strike, and strike home. O  
 dear

Brothers, the woman's Angel guards you, you  
 The sole men to be mingled with our cause,  
 The sole men we shall prize in the after time,  
 Your very armor hallowed, and your statues  
 Reared, sung to, when, this gad-fly brushed aside,  
 We plant a solid foot into the Time,  
 And mould a generation strong to move

With claim on claim from right to right, till she  
Whose name is yoked with children's, know herself;  
And knowledge in our own land make her free,  
And, ever following those two crowned twins,  
Commerce and conquest, shower the fiery grain  
Of Freedom broadcast over all that orbs  
Between the Northern and the Southern morn."

Then came a postscript dashed across the rest.  
"See that there be no traitors in your camp:  
We seem a nest of traitors—none to trust  
Since our arms failed—this Egypt-plague of men!  
Almost our maids were better at their homes,  
Than thus man-girdled here: Indeed I think  
Our chiefest comfort is the little child  
Of one unworthy mother; which she left:  
She shall not have it back: the child shall grow  
To prize the authentic mother of her mind.  
I took it for an hour in mine own bed,  
This morning: there the tender orphan hands  
Felt at my heart, and seemed to charm from thence  
The wrath I nursed against the world: farewell."

I ceased; he said: "Stubborn, but she may sit  
Upon a king's right hand in thunder-storms  
And breed up warriors! See now, though yourself  
Be dazzled by the wildfire Love to sloughs  
That swallow common sense, the spindling king,  
This Gama swamped in lazy tolerance.  
When the man wants weight the woman takes it  
up,  
And topples down the scales; but this is fixt  
As are the roots of earth and base of all.  
Man for the field, and woman for the hearth:  
Man for the sword, and for the needle she:  
Man with the head, and woman with the heart:  
Man to command, and woman to obey;  
All else confusion. Look you: the gray mare  
Is ill to live with, when her whinny shrills

From tile to scullery, and her small goodman  
Shrinks in his arm-chair, while the fires of Hell  
Mix with his hearth : but you—she's yet a colt—  
Take, break her : strongly groomed and straitly  
curbed,

She might not rank with those detestable  
That let the bantling scald at home, and brawl  
Their rights or wrongs like pot-herbs in the street.  
They say she's comely ; there's the fairer chance :  
*I* like her none the less for rating at her !  
Besides, the woman wed is not as we,  
But suffers change of frame. A lusty brace  
Of twins may weed her of her folly. Boy,  
The bearing and the training of a child  
Is woman's wisdom."

Thus the hard old king :

I took my leave, for it was nearly noon :  
I pored upon her letter which I held,  
And on the little clause, " take not his life :  
I mused on that wild morning in the woods,  
And on the " Follow, follow, thou shalt win : "  
I thought on all the wrathful king had said,  
And how the strange betrothment was to end :  
Then I remembered that burnt sorcerer's curse,  
That one should fight with shadows, and should fall ;  
And like a flash the weird affection came :  
King, camp and college turned to hollow shows ;  
I seemed to move in old memorial tilts,  
And doing battle with forgotten ghosts,  
To dream myself the shadow of a dream ;  
And ere I woke it was the point of noon,  
The lists were ready. Empanoplied and plumed  
We entered in, and waited, fifty there  
Opposed to fifty, till the trumpet blared  
At the barrier, like a wild horn in a land  
Of echoes, and a moment, and once more  
The trumpet, and again : at which the storm  
Of galloping hoofs bare on the ridge of spears,



And riders front to front, until they closed  
In conflict with the crash of shivering points,  
And thunder. Yet it seemed a dream ; I dreamed  
Of fighting. On his haunches rose the steed,  
And into fiery splinters leapt the lance,  
And out of stricken helmets sprang the fire.  
Part sat like rocks : part reeled but kept their seats :  
Part rolled on the earth and rose again and drew :  
Part stumbled, mixt with floundering horses. Down  
From those two bulks at Arac's side, and down  
From Arac's arm, as from a giant's flail,  
The large blows rained, as here and everywhere  
He rode the mellay, lord of the ringing lists,  
And all the plain,—brand, mace, and shaft, and  
shield,

Shocked, like an iron-clanging anvil banged  
With hammers ; till I thought, can this be he  
From Gama's dwarfish loins ? if this be so,  
The mother makes us most—and in my dream  
I glanced aside, and saw the palace-front  
Alive with fluttering scarfs and ladies' eyes,  
And highest among the statues, statue-like,  
Between a cymbaled Miriam and a Jael,  
With Psyche's babe, was Ida watching us,  
A single band of gold about her hair,  
Like a Saint's glory up in heaven : but she  
No saint—inexorable—no tenderness—  
Too hard, too cruel : yet she sees me fight,  
Yea, let her see me fall ! with that I drave  
Among the thickest, and bore down a Prince,  
And Cyril one. Yea, let me make my dream  
All that I would. But that large-moulded man,  
His visage all agrin as at a wake,  
Made at me through the press, and staggering back  
With stroke on stroke the horse and horseman, came  
As comes a pillar of electric cloud,  
Flaying the roofs and sucking up the drains,  
And shadowing down the champaign till it strikes

On a wood, and takes, and breaks, and cracks, and  
splits,  
And twists the grain with such a roar that Earth  
Reels and the herdsman cry, for every thing  
Gave way before him : only Florian, he  
That loved me closer than his own right eye,  
Thrust in between ; but Arac rode him down :  
And Cyril seeing it, pushed against the Prince,  
With Psyche's color round his helmet, tough,  
Strong, supple, sinew-corded, apt at arms ;  
But tougher, heavier, stronger, he that smote  
And threw him : last I spurred ; I felt my veins  
Stretch with fierce heat ; a moment hand to hand,  
And sword to sword, and horse to horse, we hung,  
Till I struck out and shouted ; the blade glanced ;  
I did but shear a feather, and dream and truth  
Flowed from me ; darkness closed me ; and I fell.

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Home they brought her warrior dead :  
She nor swooned, nor uttered cry :  
All her maidens, watching, said,  
" She must weep or she will die."

Then they praised him, soft and low,  
Called him worthy to be loved,  
Truest friend and noblest foe ;  
Yet she neither spoke nor moved.

Stole a maiden from her place,  
Lightly to the warrior stept,  
Took the face-cloth from the face :  
Yet she neither moved nor wept.

Rose a nurse of ninety years,  
Set his child upon her knee—  
Like summer tempest came her tears—  
" Sweet my child, I live for thee."

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## VI.

My dream had never died or lived again.  
As in some mystic middle state I lay ;  
Seeing I saw not, hearing not I heard ;  
Though, if I saw not, yet they told me all  
So often, that I speak as having seen.

For so it seemed, or so they said to me,  
That all things grew more tragic and more strange ;  
That when our side was vanquished, and my cause  
Forever lost, there went up a great cry,  
The Prince is slain. My father heard and ran  
In on the lists, and there unlaced my casque  
And grovelled on my body, and after him  
Came Psyche, sorrowing for Aglaia.

But high upon the palace Ida stood  
With Psyche's babe in arm : there on the roofs  
Like that great dame of Lapidoth she sang.

" Our enemies have fallen, have fallen : the seed,  
The little seed they laughed at in the dark,  
Has risen and cleft the soil, and grown a bulk  
Of spanless girth, that lays on every side  
A thousand arms and rushes to the Sun.

" Our enemies have fallen, have fallen ; they  
came ;  
The leaves were wet with women's tears : they  
heard  
A noise of songs they would not understand.  
They marked it with the red cross to the fall,  
And would have strown it, and are fallen themselves.

" Our enemies have fallen, have fallen : they  
came,  
The woodmen with their axes : lo the tree !  
But we will make it fagots for the hearth,

And shape it plank and beam for roof and floor,  
And boats and bridges for the use of men.

“ Our enemies have fallen, have fallen : they  
struck ;  
With their own blows they hurt themselves, nor  
knew  
There dwelt an iron nature in the grain :  
The glittering axe was broken in their arms,  
Their arms were shattered to the shoulder blade.

“ Our enemies have fallen, but this shall grow  
A night of Summer from the heat, a breadth  
Of Autumn, dropping fruits of power ; and rolled  
With music in the growing breeze of Time,  
The tops shall strike from star to star, the fangs  
Shall move the stony bases of the world.

“ And now, O maids, behold our sanctuary  
Is violate, our laws broken : fear we not  
To break them more in their behoof, whose arms  
Championed our cause and won it with a day  
Blanched in our annals, and perpetual feast,  
When dames and heroines of the golden year  
Shall strip a hundred hollows bare of Spring,  
To rain an April of ovation round  
Their statues, borne aloft, the three : but come,  
We will be liberal, since our rights are won.  
Let them not lie in the tents, with coarse mankind,  
Ill nurses ; but descend, and proffer these,  
The brethren of our blood and cause, that there  
Lie bruised and maimed, the tender ministries  
Of female hands and hospitality.”

She spoke, and with the babe yet in her arms,  
Descending, burst the great bronze valves, and led  
A hundred maids in train across the Park.  
Some cowed, and some bareheaded, on they came,  
Their feet in flowers, her loveliest : by them went

The enamored air sighing, and on their curls  
From the high tree the blossom wavering fell,  
And over them the tremulous isles of light  
Slided, they moving under shade: but Blanche  
At distance followed: so they came: anon  
Through open field into the lists they wound  
Timorously; and as the leader of the herd  
That holds a stately fretwork to the Sun,  
And followed up by a hundred airy does,  
Steps with a tender foot, light as on air,  
The lovely, lordly creature floated on  
To where her wounded brethren lay; there stayed;  
Knelt on one knee,—the child on one,—and prest  
Their hands, and called them dear deliverers,  
And happy warriors, and immortal names,  
And said, “You shall not lie in the tents, but here,  
And nursed by those for whom you fought, and  
served  
With female hands and hospitality.”

Then, whether moved by this, or was it chance,  
She past my way. Up started from my side  
The old lion, glaring with his whelpless eye,  
Silent; but when she saw me lying stark,  
Dishelmed and mute, and motionlessly pale,  
Cold even to her, she sighed; and when she saw  
The haggard father's face and reverend beard  
Of grisly twine, all dabbled with the blood  
Of his own son, shuddered, a twitch of pain  
Tortured her mouth, and o'er her forehead past  
A shadow, and her hue changed, and she said:  
“He saved my life: my brother slew him for it.”  
No more: at which the king in bitter scorn  
Drew from my neck the painting and the tress,  
And held them up: she saw them, and a day  
Rose from the distance on her memory,  
When the good queen, her mother, shore the tress  
With kisses, ere the days of Lady Blanche:  
And then once more she looked at my pale face:

Till understanding all the foolish work  
Of Fancy, and the bitter close of all,  
Her iron will was broken in her mind ;  
Her noble heart was molten in her breast ;  
She bowed, she set the child on the earth ; she laid  
A feeling finger on my brows, and presently  
“ O Sire,” she said, “ he lives : he is not dead :  
O let me have him with my brethren here  
In our own palace : we will tend on him  
Like one of these ; if so, by any means,  
To lighten this great clog of thanks, that make  
Our progress falter to the woman’s goal.”

She said : but at the happy word, “ he lives,”  
My father stooped, re-fathered o’er my wounds.  
So those two foes above my fallen life,  
With brow to brow like night and evening mixt -  
Their dark and gray, while Psyche ever stole  
A little nearer, till the babe, that by us,  
Half-lapt in glowing gauze and golden brede,  
Lay like a new-fallen meteor on the grass,  
Uncared for, spied its mother, and began  
A blind and babbling laughter, and to dance  
Its body, and reach its fatling innocent arms,  
And lazy lingering fingers. She the appeal  
Brooked not, but clamoring out “ Mine—mine—  
not yours,  
It is not yours, but mine : give me the child,”  
Ceased all on tremble : piteous was the cry :  
So stood the unhappy mother open-mouthed,  
And turned each face her way : wan was her cheek  
With hollow watch, her blooming mantle torn,  
Red grief and mother’s hunger in her eye,  
And down dead-heavy sank her curls, and half  
The sacred mother’s bosom, panting, burst  
The laces toward her babe ; but she nor cared  
Nor knew it, clamoring on, till Ida heard,  
Looked up, and rising slowly from me, stood  
Erect and silent, striking with her glance

The mother, me, the child ; but he that lay  
Beside us, Cyril, battered as he was,  
Trailed himself up on one knee : then he drew  
Her robe to meet his lips, and down she looked  
At the armed man sideways, pitying, as it seemed,  
Or self-involved ; but when she learnt his face,  
Remembering his ill-omened song, arose  
Once more through all her height, and o'er him  
grew  
Tall as a figure lengthened on the sand  
When the tide ebbs in sunshine, and he said :

“ O fair and strong and terrible ! Lioness  
That with your long locks play the Lion’s mane !  
But Love and Nature, these are two more terrible  
And stronger. See, your foot is on our necks,  
We vanquished, you the Victor of your will.  
What would you more ? give her the child ! remain  
Orbed in your isolation : he is dead,  
Or all as dead : henceforth we let you be :  
Win you the hearts of women ; and beware  
Lest, where you seek the common love of these,  
The common hate, with the revolving wheel,  
Should drag you down, and some great Nemesis  
Break from a darkened future, crowned with fire,  
And tread you out forever : but howsoe’er  
Fixed in yourself, never in your own arms  
To hold your own, deny not hers to her,  
Give her the child ! O if, I say, you keep  
One pulse that beats true woman, if you loved  
The breast that fed or arm that dandled you,  
Or own one part of sense not flint to prayer,  
Give her the child ! or if you scorn to lay it,  
Yourself, in hands so lately clasped with yours,  
Or speak to her, your dearest, her one fault  
The tenderness, not yours, that could not kill,  
Give *me* it ; I will give it her.”

He said :

At first her eye with slow dilation rolled

Dry flame, she listening ; after sank and sank,  
 And, into mournful twilight mellowing, dwelt  
 Full on the child ; she took it : " Pretty bud !  
 Lily of the vale ! half-opened bell of the woods !  
 Sole comfort of my dark hour, when a world  
 Of traitorous friend and broken system made  
 No purple in the distance, mystery,  
 Pledge of a love not to be mine, farewell ;  
 These men are hard upon us as of old,  
 We two must part : and yet how fain was I  
 To dream thy cause embraced in mine, to think  
 I might be something to thee, when I felt  
 Thy helpless warmth about my barren breast  
 In the dead prime : but may thy mother prove  
 As true to thee as false, false, false, to me !  
 And, if thou needs must bear the yoke, I wish it  
 Gentle as freedom "—here she kissed it : then—  
 " All good go with thee ! take it, Sir," and so  
 Laid the soft babe in his hard-mailed hands,  
 Who turned half-round to Psyche as she sprang  
 To meet it, with an eye that swam in thanks,  
 Then felt it sound and whole from head to foot,  
 And hugged and never hugged it close enough,  
 And in her hunger mouthed and mumbled it,  
 And hid her bosom with it ; after that  
 Put on more calm, and added suppliantly ;

" We two were friends : I go to mine own land  
 Forever ; find some other : as for me,  
 I scarce am fit for your great plans : yet speak to  
 me.  
 Say one soft word, and let me part forgiven."

But Ida spoke not, rapt upon the child.  
 Then Arac. " Ida—'sdeath ! you blame the man ;  
 You wrong yourselves—the woman is so hard  
 Upon the woman. Come, a grace to me !  
 I am your warrior ; I and mine have fought  
 Your battle : kiss her ; take her hand, she weeps :



'Sdeath ! I would sooner fight thrice o'er than see it."

But Ida spoke not, gazing on the ground ;  
And reddening in the furrows of his chin,  
And moved beyond his custom, Gama said :

" I've heard that there is iron in the blood,  
And I believe it. Not one word ? Not one ?  
Whence drew you this steel temper ? not from me,  
Not from your mother, now a saint with saints.  
She said you had a heart—I heard her say it—  
' Our Ida has a heart,'—just ere she died—  
' But see that some one with authority  
Be near her still,' and I—I sought for one—  
All people said she had authority—  
The Lady Blanche : much profit ! Not one word ;  
No ! though your father sues : see how you stand  
Stiff as Lot's wife, and all the good knights maimed,  
I trust that there is no one hurt to death,  
For your wild whim : and was it, then, for this,  
Was it for this we gave our palace up,  
Where we withdrew from summer heats and state,  
And had our wine and chess beneath the planes,  
And many a pleasant hour with her that's gone,  
Ere you were born to vex us ? Is it kind ?  
Speak to her, I say : is this not she of whom,  
When first she came, all flushed you said to me,  
Now had you got a friend of your own age,  
Now could you share your thought ; now should  
men see

Two women faster welded in one love  
Than pairs of wedlock ; she you walked with, she  
You talked with, whole nights long, up in the tower,  
Of sine and arc, spheroid and azimuth,  
And right ascension, Heaven knows what ; and now  
A word, but one, one little kindly word,  
Not one to spare her : out upon you, flint !  
You love nor her, nor me, nor any ; nay,

You shame your mother's judgment too. Not one?  
 You will not? well—no heart have you, or such  
 As fancies, like the vermin in a nut,  
 Have fretted all to dust and bitterness!"  
 So said the small king, moved beyond his wont.

But Ida stood nor spoke, drained of her force  
 By many a varying influence and so long:  
 Down through her limbs a drooping languor wept:  
 Her head a little bent; and on her mouth  
 A doubtful smile dwelt like a clouded moon  
 In a still water: then brake out my sire,  
 Lifting his grim head from my wounds: "O you,  
 Woman, whom we thought woman even now,  
 And were half-fooled to let you tend our son,  
 Because he might have wished it—but we see  
 The accomplice of your madness unforgiven,  
 And think that you might mix his draught with  
 death,  
 When your skies change again: the rougher hand  
 Is safer: on to the tents: take up the Prince."

He rose, and while each ear was pricked to attend  
 A tempest, through the cloud that dimmed her  
 broke  
 A genial warmth and light once more, and shone  
 Through glittering drops on her sad friend.

"Come hither,  
 O Psyche," she cried out, "embrace me, come,  
 Quick, while I melt; make reconciliation sure  
 With one that cannot keep her mind an hour:  
 Come to the hollow heart they slander so!  
 Kiss and be friends like children being chid!  
 I seem no more: I want forgiveness too:  
 I should have had to do with none but maids,  
 That have no links with men. Ah false but dear,  
 Dear traitor too much loved, why?—why?—Yet  
 see

Before these kings we embrace you yet once more  
 With all forgiveness, all oblivion,  
 And trust not love you less.

And now, O Sire,  
 Grant me your son to nurse, to wait upon him,  
 Like mine own brother. For my debt to him,  
 This nightmare weight of gratitude, I know it;  
 Taunt me no more: yourself and yours shall have  
 Free adit; we will scatter all our maids  
 Till happier times, each to her proper hearth;  
 What use to keep them here, now? grant my  
 prayer.

Help, father, brother, help; speak to the king:  
 Thaw this male nature to some touch of that  
 Which kills me with myself, and drags me down  
 From my fixt height to mob me up with all  
 The soft and milky rabble of womankind,  
 Poor weakling even as they are."

Passionate tears  
 Followed: the king replied not: Cyril said:  
 "Your brother, Lady,—Florian,—ask for him  
 Of your great head—for he is wounded too—  
 That you may tend upon him with the Prince."  
 "Ay so," said Ida, with a bitter smile,  
 "Our laws are broken: let him enter too."  
 Then Violet, she that sang the mournful song  
 And had a cousin tumbled on the plain,  
 Petitioned too for him. "Ay so," she said,  
 "I stagger in the stream: I cannot keep  
 My heart an eddy from the brawling hour:  
 We break our laws with ease, but let it be."  
 "Ay so?" said Blanche: "amazed am I to hear  
 Your Highness: but your Highness breaks with  
 ease

The law your Highness did not make: 'twas I.  
 I had been wedded wife, I knew mankind,  
 And blocked them out; but these men came to woo  
 Your Highness—verily I think to win."

So she, and turned askance a wintry eye :  
But Ida, with a voice that like a bell  
Tolled by an earthquake in a trembling tower  
Rang ruin, answered full of grief and scorn :

“ Fling our doors wide ! all, all, not one, but all,  
Not only he, but, by my mother’s soul,  
Whatever man lies wounded, friend or foe,  
Shall enter, if he will. Let our girls flit  
Till the storm die ! but had you stood by us,  
The roar that breaks the Pharos from his base  
Had left us rock. She fain would sting us too,  
But shall not. Pass, and mingle with your likes.  
We brook no further insult, but are gone.”

She turned ; the very nape of her white neck  
Was rosed with indignation : but the Prince  
Her brother came ; the king her father charmed  
Her wounded soul with words ; nor did mine own  
Refuse her proffer, lastly gave his hand.

Then us they lifted up, dead weights, and bare  
Straight to the doors : to them the doors gave way  
Groaning, and in the vestal entry shrieked  
The virgin marble under iron heels :  
And on they moved and gained the hall, and there  
Rested : but great the crush was, and each base,  
To left and right, of those tall columns drowned  
In silken fluctuation and the swarm  
Of female whisperers : at the further end  
Was Ida by the throne, the two great cats  
Close by her like supporters on a shield  
Bow-backed with fear : but in the centre stood  
The common men with rolling eyes ; amazed  
They glared upon the women, and aghast  
The women stared at these, all silent, save  
When armor clashed or jingled, while the day,  
Descending, struck athwart the hall, and shot  
A flying splendor out of brass and steel,

That o'er the statues leaped from head to head,  
Now fired an angry Pallas on the helm,  
Now set a wrathful Dian's moon on flame,  
And now and then an echo started up,  
And shuddering fled from room to room, and died  
Of fright in far apartments.

Then the voice  
Of Ida sounded, issuing ordinance :  
And me they bore up the broad stairs and through  
The long-laid galleries past a hundred doors  
To one deep chamber shut from sound, and due  
To languid limbs and sickness ; left me in it ;  
And others elsewhere they laid ; and all  
That afternoon a sound arose of hoof  
And chariot, many a maiden passing home  
Till happier times ; but some were left of those  
Held sagest, and the great lords out and in,  
From those two hosts that lay beside the walls,  
Walked at their will, and every thing was changed.

Ask me no more: the moon may draw the sea;  
The cloud may stoop from heaven and take the  
shape,  
With fold to fold, of mountain or of cape;  
But, O too fond, when have I answered thee?  
Ask me no more.

Ask me no more: what answer should I give?  
I love not hollow cheek or faded eye:  
Yet, O my friend, I will not have thee die!  
Ask me no more, lest I should bid thee live;  
Ask me no more.

Ask me no more: thy fate and mine are sealed:  
I strove against the stream and all in vain:  
Let the great river take me to the main:  
No more, dear love, for at a touch I yield;  
Ask me no more.

## VII.

So was their sanctuary violated,  
So their fair college turned to hospital;  
At first with all confusion: by and by  
Sweet order lived again with other laws:  
A kindlier influence reigned; and everywhere  
Low voices with the ministering hand  
Hung round the sick: the maidens came, they  
talked,  
They sang, they read: till she not fair, began  
To gather light, and she that was, became  
Her former beauty treble; and to and fro  
With books, with flowers, with Angel offices,  
Like creatures native unto gracious act,  
And in their own clear element, they moved.

But sadness on the soul of Ida fell,  
And hatred of her weakness, blent with shame.  
Old studies failed: seldom she spoke; but oft  
Clomb to the roofs, and gazed alone for hours  
On that disastrous leaguer, swarms of men  
Darkening her female field: void was her use;  
And she as one that climbs a peak to gaze  
O'er land and main, and sees a great black cloud  
Drag inward from the deeps, a wall of night,  
Blot out the slope of sea from verge to shore,  
And suck the blinding splendor from the sand,  
And quenching lake by lake and tarn by tarn  
Expunge the world: so fared she gazing there;  
So blackened all her world in secret, blank  
And waste it seemed and vain; till down she came  
And found fair peace once more among the sick.

And twilight dawned; and morn by morn the  
lark  
Shot up and shrilled in flickering gyres, but I  
Lay silent in the muffled cage of life:

And twilight gloomed ; and broader grown the  
bowers  
Drew the great night into themselves, and Heaven  
Star after star arose and fell ; but I,  
Deeper than those weird doubts could reach me, lay  
Quite sundered from the moving Universe,  
Nor knew what eye was on me nor the hand  
That nursed me, more than infants in their sleep.

But Psyche tended Florian : with her oft  
Melissa came ; for Blanche had gone, but left  
Her child among us, willing she should keep  
Court-favor : here and there the small bright head,  
A light of healing, glanced about the couch,  
Or through the parted silks the tender face  
Peeped, shining in upon the wounded man  
With blush and smile, a medicine in themselves  
To wile the length from languorous hours and draw  
The sting from pain ; nor seemed it strange that  
soon

He rose up whole, and those fair charities  
Joined at her side : nor stranger seemed that hearts  
So gentle, so employed, should close in love,  
Than when two dew-drops on the petal shake  
To the same sweet air and tremble deeper down,  
And slip at once all-fragrant into one.

Less prosperously the second suit obtained  
At first with Psyche. Not though Blanche had  
sworn

That after that dark night among the fields,  
She needs must wed him for her own good name ;  
Not though he built upon the babe restored ;  
Nor though she liked him, yielded she, but feared  
To incense the Head once more ; till on a day  
When Cyril pleaded, Ida came behind  
Seen but of Psyche. On her foot she hung  
A moment and she heard, at which her face  
A little flushed and she past on ; but each

Assumed from thence a half-consent involved  
In stillness, plighted troth, and were at peace.

Nor only these : Love in the sacred halls  
Held carnival at will, and flying struck  
With showers of random sweet on maid and man.  
Nor did her father cease to press my claim,  
Nor did mine own, now reconciled ; nor yet  
Did those twin brothers, risen again and whole ;  
Nor Arac, satiate with his victory.

But I lay still, and with me oft she sat :  
Then came a change ; for sometimes I would catch  
Her hand in wild delirium, gripe it hard,  
And fling it like a viper off, and shriek  
“ You are not Ida ; ” clasp it once again,  
And call her Ida, though I knew her not,  
And call her sweet, as if in irony,  
And call her hard and cold which seemed a truth :  
And still she feared that I should lose my mind,  
And often she believed that I should die :  
Till out of long frustration of her care,  
And pensive tendance in the all-weary noons,  
And watches in the dead, the dark, when clocks  
Throbbled thunder through the palace floors, or  
called

On flying Time from all their silver tongues—  
And out of memories of her kindlier days,  
And sidelong glances at my father's grief,  
And at the happy lovers heart in heart—  
And out of hauntings of my spoken love,  
And lonely listenings to my muttered dream,  
And often feeling of the helpless hands,  
And wordless broodings on the wasted cheek—  
From all a closer interest flourished up  
Tenderness touch by touch, and last, to these,  
Love, like an Alpine harebell hung with tears  
By some cold morning glacier ; frail at first



And feeble, all unconscious of itself,  
But such as gathered color day by day.

Last I woke sane, but wellnigh close to death  
For weakness: it was evening: silent light  
Slept on the painted walls, wherein were wrought  
Two grand designs; for on one side arose  
The women up in wild revolt, and stormed  
At the Oppian law. Titanic shapes, they crammed  
The forum, and half-crushed among the rest  
A dwarf-like Cato cowered. On the other side  
Hortensia spoke against the tax; behind,  
A train of dames: by axe and eagle sat,  
With all their foreheads drawn in Roman scowls,  
And half the wolf's-milk curdled in their veins,  
The fierce triumvirs; and before them paused  
Hortensia, pleading: angry was her face.

I saw the forms: I knew not where I was:  
They did but look like hollow shows; nor more  
Sweet Ida: palm to palm she sat: the dew  
Dwelt in her eyes, and softer all her shape  
And rounder seemed: I moved: I sighed: a touch  
Came round my wrist, and tears upon my hand:  
Then all for languor and self-pity ran  
Mine down my face, and with what life I had,  
And like a flower that cannot all unfold,  
So drenched it is with tempest, to the sun,  
Yet, as it may, turns toward him, I on her  
Fixt my faint eyes, and uttered whisperingly:

"If you be, what I think you, some sweet dream,  
I would but ask you to fulfil yourself:  
But if you be that Ida whom I knew,  
I ask you nothing: only, if a dream,  
Sweet dream, be perfect. I shall die to-night.  
Stoop down and seem to kiss me ere I die."

I could no more, but lay like one in trance,

That hears his burial talked of by his friends,  
And cannot speak, nor move, nor make one sign,  
But lies and dreads his doom. She turned; she  
    paused;  
She stooped; and out of languor leapt a cry,  
Leapt fiery Passion from the brinks of death;  
And I believed that in the living world  
My spirit closed with Ida's at the lips;  
Till back I fell, and from mine arms she rose  
Glowing all over noble shame; and all  
Her falser self slipt from her like a robe,  
And left her woman, lovelier in her mood  
Than in her mould that other, when she came  
From barren deeps to conquer all with love;  
And down the streaming crystal dropt, and she  
Far-fleeted by the purple island-sides,  
Naked, a double light in air and wave,  
To meet her Graces, where they decked her out  
For worship without end; nor end of mine,  
Stateliest, for thee! but mute she glided forth,  
Nor glanced behind her, and I sank and slept,  
Filled through and through with Love, a happy  
    sleep.

Deep in the night I woke: she, near me, held  
A volume of the Poets of her land:  
There to herself, all in low tones, she read.

“Now sleeps the crimson petal, now the white,  
Nor waves the cypress in the palace walk;  
Nor winks the gold fin in the porphyry font:  
The fire-fly wakens: waken thou with me.

“Now droops the milk-white peacock like a ghost,  
And like a ghost she glimmers on to me.

“Now lies the Earth all Danaë to the stars,  
And all thy heart lies open unto me.

“ Now slides the silent meteor on, and leaves  
A shining furrow, as thy thoughts in me.

“ Now folds the lily all her sweetness up,  
And slips into the bosom of the lake :  
So fold thyself, my dearest, thou, and slip  
Into my bosom and be lost in me.”

I heard her turn the page ; she found a small  
Sweet Idyl, and once more, as low, she read :

“ Come down, oh maid, from yonder mountain  
height :  
What pleasure lives in height, (the shepherd sang,)  
In height and cold, the splendor of the hills ?  
But cease to move so near the Heavens, and cease  
To glide a sunbeam by the blasted pine,  
To sit a star upon the sparkling spire ;  
And come, for Love is of the valley, come,  
For Love is of the valley, come thou down  
And find him ; by the happy threshold, he,  
Or hand in hand with Plenty in the maize,  
Or red with spirted purple of the vats,  
Or foxlike in the vine ; nor cares to walk  
With Death and Morning on the Silver Horns,  
Nor wilt thou snare him in the white ravine,  
Nor find him dropt upon the firths of ice,  
That huddling slant in furrow-cloven falls  
To roll the torrent out of dusky doors :  
But follow ; let the torrent dance thee down  
To find him in the valley ; let the wild  
Lean-headed Eagles yelp alone, and leave  
The monstrous ledges there to slope, and spill  
Their thousand wreaths of dangling water-smoke,  
That like a broken purpose waste in air :  
So waste not thou ; but come ; for all the vales  
Await thee ; azure pillars of the hearth  
Arise to thee ; the children call, and I  
Thy shepherd pipe, and sweet is every sound,

Sweeter thy voice, but every sound is sweet;  
 Myriads of rivulets hurrying through the lawn,  
 The moan of doves in immemorial elms,  
 And murmuring of innumerable bees."

So she low-toned; while with shut eyes I lay  
 Listening; then looked. Pale was the perfect face;  
 The bosom with long sighs labored; and meek  
 Seemed the full lips, and mild the luminous eyes,  
 And the voice trembled and the hand. She said  
 Brokenly, that she knew it, she had failed  
 In sweet humility; had failed in all;  
 That all her labor was but as a block  
 Left in the quarry; but she still were loth,  
 She still were loth to yield herself to one,  
 That wholly scorned to help their equal rights  
 Against the sons of men, and barbarous laws.  
 She prayed me not to judge their cause from her  
 That wronged it, sought far less for truth than  
     power  
 In knowledge: something wild within her breast,  
 A greater than all knowledge, beat her down.  
 And she had nursed me there from week to week:  
 Much had she learnt in little time. In part  
 It was ill counsel had misled the girl  
 To vex true hearts: yet was she but a girl—  
 "Ah fool, and made myself a Queen of farce!  
 When comes another such? never, I think,  
 Till the Sun drop dead from the signs."

Her voice  
 Choked, and her forehead sank upon her hands,  
 And her great heart through all the faultful Past  
 Went sorrowing in a pause I dared not break;  
 Till notice of a change in the dark world  
 Was lispt about the acacias, and a bird  
 That early woke to feed her little ones  
 Sent from a dewy breast a cry for light:  
 She moved, and at her feet the volume fell.

“Blame not thyself too much,” I said, “nor blame  
Too much the sons of men and barbarous laws;  
These were the rough ways of the world till now.  
Henceforth thou hast a helper, me, that know  
The woman’s cause is man’s : they rise or sink  
Together, dwarfed or godlike, bond or free :  
For she that out of Lethe scales with man  
The shining steps of Nature, shares with man  
His nights, his days, moves with him to one goal,  
Stays all the fair young planet in her hands—  
If she be small, slight-natured, miserable,  
How shall men grow ? but work no more alone !  
Our place is much : as far as in us lies  
We two will serve them both in aiding her—  
Will clear away the parasitic forms  
That seem to keep her up, but drag her down—  
Will leave her space to burgeon out of all  
Within her—let her make herself her own  
To give or keep, to live and learn and be  
All that not harms distinctive womanhood.  
For woman is not undeveloped man,  
But diverse : could we make her as the man,  
Sweet love were slain : his dearest bond is this,  
Not like to like, but like in difference :  
Yet in the long years liker must they grow ;  
The man be more of woman, she of man ;  
He gain in sweetness and in moral height,  
Nor lose the wrestling thews that throw the world ;  
She mental breadth, nor fail in childward care,  
Nor lose the childlike in the larger mind ;  
Till at the last she set herself to man,  
Like perfect music unto noble words ;  
And so these twain, upon the skirts of Time,  
Sit side by side, full-summed in all their powers,  
Dispensing harvest, sowing the To-be,  
Self-reverent each and reverencing each,  
Distinct in individualities,  
But like each other even as those who love.  
Then comes the statelier Eden back to men :

Then reign the world's great bridals, chaste and calm  
Then springs the crowning race of humankind.  
May these things be ! ”

Sighing she spoke, “ I fear  
They will not.”

“ Dear, but let us type them now  
In our own lives, and this proud watchword rest  
Of equal ; seeing either sex alone  
Is half itself, and in true marriage lies  
Nor equal, nor unequal : each fulfils  
Defect in each, and always thought in thought,  
Purpose in purpose, will in will, they grow,  
The single pure and perfect animal,  
The two-celled heart, beating with one full stroke,  
Life.”

And again sighing she spoke : “ A dream  
That once was mine ! what woman taught you this ? ”

“ Alone,” I said, “ from earlier than I know,  
Immersed in rich foreshadowings of the world,  
I loved the woman : he, that doth not, lives  
A drowning life, besotted in sweet self,  
Or pines in sad experience worse than death,  
Or keeps his winged affections clipt with crime :  
Yet was there one through whom I loved her, one  
Not learned, save in gracious household ways,  
Not perfect, nay, but full of tender wants,  
No Angel, but a dearer being, all dipt  
In Angel instincts, breathing Paradise,  
Interpreter between the Gods and men,  
Who looked all native to her place, and yet  
On tiptoe seemed to touch upon a sphere  
Too gross to tread, and all male minds perforce  
Swayed to her from their orbits as they moved  
And girdled her with music. Happy he  
With such a mother ! faith in womankind  
Beats with his blood, and trust in all things high  
Comes easy to him, and though he trip and fall,  
He shall not blind his soul with clay.”

“ But I,”

Said Ida, tremulously, “ so all unlike—  
It seems you love to cheat yourself with words :  
This mother is your model. I have heard  
Of your strange doubts : they well might be : I seem  
A mockery to my own self. Never, Prince ;  
You cannot love me.”

“ Nay, but thee,” I said,  
“ From year-long poring on thy pictured eyes,  
Ere seen I loved, and loved thee seen, and saw  
Thee woman through the crust of iron moods  
That masked thee from men’s reverence up, and  
forced

Sweet love on pranks of saucy boyhood : now  
Given back to life ; to life indeed, through thee,  
Indeed I love : the new day comes, the light  
Dearer for night, as dearer thou for faults  
Lived over : lift thine eyes ; my doubts are dead,  
My haunting sense of hollow shows : the change,  
This truthful change in thee has killed it. Dear,  
Look up and let thy nature strike on mine  
Like yonder morning on the blind half-world ;  
Approach and fear not ; breathe upon my brows ;  
In that fine air I tremble, all the past  
Melts mist-like into this bright hour, and this  
Is morn to more, and all the rich to come  
Reels, as the golden Autumn woodland reels  
Athwart the smoke of burning weeds. Forgive me,  
I waste my heart in signs : let be. My bride,  
My wife, my life. O we will walk this world,  
Yoked in all exercise of noble end,  
And so through those dark gates across the wild  
That no man knows. Indeed I love thee ; come,  
Yield thyself up : my hopes and thine are one :  
Accomplish thou my manhood and thyself,  
Lay thy sweet hands in mine and trust to me.”

## CONCLUSION.

So closed our tale, of which I give you all  
 The random scheme as wildly as it rose :  
 The words are mostly mine : for when we ceased  
 There came a minute's pause, and Walter said,  
 " I wish she had not yielded ! " then to me,  
 " What, if you drest it up poetically ? "  
 So prayed the men, the women : I gave assent :  
 Yet how to bind the scattered scheme of seven  
 Together in one sheaf ? What style could suit ?  
 The men required that I should give throughout  
 The sort of mock-heroic gigantesque,  
 With which we bantered little Lilia first :  
 The women—and perhaps they felt their power,  
 For something in the ballads which they sang,  
 Or in their silent influence as they sat,  
 Had ever seemed to wrestle with burlesque,  
 And drove us, last, to quite a solemn close—  
 They hated banter, wished for something real,  
 A gallant fight, a noble princess—why  
 Not make her true-heroic—true-sublime ?  
 Or all, they said, as earnest as the close ?  
 Which yet with such a framework scarce could be.  
 Then rose a little feud betwixt the two,  
 Betwixt the mockers and the realists :  
 And I, betwixt them both, to please them both,  
 And yet to give the story as it rose,  
 I moved as in a strange diagonal,  
 And maybe neither pleased myself nor them.

But Lilia pleased me, for she took no part  
 In our dispute : the sequel of the tale  
 Had touched her ; and she sat, she plucked the  
 grass,  
 She flung it from her, thinking : last, she fixt  
 A showery glance upon her aunt, and said,  
 " You—tell us what we are ; " who might have told,



For she was crammed with theories out of books,  
But that there rose a shout: the gates were closed  
At sunset, and the crowd were swarming now,  
To take their leave, about the garden rails.

So I and some went out to these: we climbed  
The slope to Vivian-place, and turning saw  
The happy valleys half in light and half  
Far-shadowing from the west, a land of peace:  
Gray halls alone among their massive groves;  
Trim hamlets; here and there a rustic tower  
Half-lost in belts of hop and breadths of wheat;  
The shimmering glimpses of a stream; the seas;  
A red sail, or a white; and far beyond,  
Imagined more than seen, the skirts of France.

“Look there, a garden!” said my college friend,  
The Tory member’s elder son, “and there!  
God bless the narrow sea which keeps her off,  
And keeps our Britain, whole within herself,  
A nation yet, the rulers and the ruled—  
Some sense of duty, something of a faith,  
Some reverence for the laws ourselves have made,  
Some patient force to change them when we will,  
Some civic manhood firm against the crowd—  
But yonder, whiff! there comes a sudden heat,  
The gravest citizen seems to lose his head,  
The king is scared, the soldier will not fight,  
The little boys begin to shoot and stab,  
A kingdom topples over with a shriek  
Like an old woman, and down rolls the world  
In mock heroics stranger than our own;  
Revolts, republics, revolutions, most  
No graver than a school-boys’ barring out;  
Too comic for the solemn things they are,  
Too solemn for the comic touches in them,  
Like our wild Princess with as wise a dream  
As some of theirs—God bless the narrow seas!  
I wish they were a whole Atlantic broad.”

“Have patience,” I replied, “ourselves are full  
Of social wrong; and maybe wildest dreams  
Are but the needful preludes of the truth:  
For me, the genial day, the happy crowd,  
The sport half-science, fill me with a faith.  
This fine old world of ours is but a child  
Yet in the go-cart. Patience! Give it time  
To learn its limbs: there is a hand that guides.”

In such discourse we gained the garden rails,  
And there we saw Sir Walter where he stood,  
Before a tower of crimson holly-oaks,  
Among six boys, head under head, and looked  
No little lily-handed Baronet he,  
A great broad-shouldered genial Englishman,  
A lord of fat prize-oxen and of sheep,  
A raiser of huge melons and of pine,  
A patron of some thirty charities,  
A pamphleteer on guano and on grain,  
A quarter-sessions chairman, abler none;  
Fair-haired and redder than a windy morn;  
Now shaking hands with him, now him, of those  
That stood the nearest—now addressed to speech—  
Who spoke few words and pithy, such as closed  
Welcome, farewell, and welcome for the year  
To follow: a shout rose again, and made  
The long line of the approaching rookery swerve  
From the elms, and shook the branches of the deer  
From slope to slope through distant ferns, and rang  
Beyond the bourn of sunset; O, a shout  
More joyful than the city-roar that hails  
Premier or king! Why should not these great Sirs  
Give up their parks some dozen times a year  
To let the people breathe? So thrice they cried,  
I likewise, and in groups they streamed away.

But we went back to the Abbey, and sat on,  
So much the gathering darkness charmed: we sat  
But spoke not, rapt in nameless reverie,

